THE

INTERIOR CASTLE;

OR,

THE MANSIONS,

&c.

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THE

INTERIOR CASTLE;

OR,

THE MANSIONS.

Written by Saint Teresa

(INCLUDING SOME OF HER MOST INTERESTING LETTERS),

AND

TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH

BY

THE REV. JOHN DALTON.

LONDON:
T. JONES, 63, PATERNOSTER ROW.
1852.

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TO THE RIGHT REVEREND

W. B. ULLATHORNE, D.D., O.S.B.,

BISHOP OF BIRMINGHAM.

My Lord,—It is with the greatest pleasure I dedicate this translation of St. Teresa's greatest work to your Lordship; and deeply grateful am I, for having received your Lordship's kind permission to do so.

I know well how devoted your Lordship is to St. Teresa; how much you admire her undaunted courage, fortitude, zeal, and confidence in God, amidst all her immense labours and extraordinary interior trials; and above all, how anxious your Lordship is that the same spirit of prayer, and the same heavenly virtues with which that glorious virgin was so wonderfully endowed, may be diffused more and more amongst all men, and especially amongst those holy religious who have chosen the Lord as "the portion of their inheritance for ever."

The illustrious order of St. Benedict has produced many admirable contemplatives and writers on "Mystical Theology," all of whom speak in the highest terms of the works of St. Teresa. I am truly grateful for your Lordship's approbation of my humble endeavours to give a correct translation of those esteemed works, the doctrine of which the Church herself styles "heavenly." I also return

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your Lordship many sincere thanks for your constant kindness towards me, and the encouragement I have so frequently received from your Lordship, to persevere in my humble labours.

May length of days be given to your Lordship, to rule with fruit a hundred-fold over the Diocese so dear to your Lordship's heart; and may St. Teresa intercede for you, that your Lordship may have grace to imitate her heroic virtues.

Begging your Lordship's blessing,

I am,

My Lord,

Your very respectful servant,

JOHN DALTON.

Aston, Daventry,
Feast of St. Aloysius,
1852.

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PREFACE.

I VENTURE to present to the Public another translation from the works of the glorious St. Teresa—one of her *greatest* and *sublimest* productions, "The Interior Castle, or Mansions."* It may not, indeed, meet with the approbation of many whose judgment demands respect, whose experience on the mission is very great, and whose opinions are entitled to every consideration. Some may even condemn the translation of such a work, as unintelligible to the generality of readers, and uncalled for in our present state. They may blame me too, and wish I had devoted my time to the translation of other more useful and interesting works.

I am ready to bow to the decision of those who are my superiors in every respect, some of whom, I am aware, do not advocate the translation of any of the works written by St. Teresa. To state here all their objections, and to answer them at the same time, would perhaps be hardly respectful. And why? Because how far such translations may or may not be desirable, is certainly a subject which requires much serious consideration;† and every one is entitled to his own opinion on the matter. I acknow-

* "Castillo Interior, o Las Moradas," is the Spanish title.

† See some excellent observations on this point in the "Rambler" for March, 1852 (p. 211).

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ledge, that the mere fact of a book having been written by a saint, however excellent it may be in itself, is not always a sufficient reason for translating it. Some spiritual works, if translated into English, might do much more *harm* than good.

Still there seems to be a great difference of opinion as to the utility or propriety of translating certain "Lives of the Saints," or certain works written by them. Some, for instance, strongly condemned the Life of St. Rose of Lima, when it was first published by the Oratorians, to whom we are indebted for so many valuable and edifying Lives; and yet how many more approved of that Life! The "Life of St. Teresa," too, has been considered by some "as exceedingly mystical, unintelligible, dry, heavy;" while many more, and I think the greater number of readers, have been delighted and edified by its perusal, and have spoken of it as worthy of general admiration, both on account of the supernatural wonders it relates, and for the practical lessons of perfection it inculcates.

It would then be unbecoming in *me* to assume an air of authority, and to decide in favour of this or that particular opinion. But as I have received the highest and most flattering encouragement, both from bishops and priests, to continue the translation of St. Teresa's works, I trust I shall not be blamed for presenting the Public with the present translation. Many, I think, will admire it as a "most sublime composition," and others may perhaps condemn it. For my part, I admire it exceedingly. I should indeed be sorry *to condemn anything written*

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by St. Teresa. But to praise this work, "The Interior Castle," as it deserves, I am unable; and to understand the saint's explanation of visions and raptures, is given only to those who have experienced them. But are we authorized to condemn the book, simply because we cannot comprehend all that the saint says? Let us hear herself speak on this point: —"As the contemplation of heavenly things, and that glory which the blessed enjoy, does not injure us, but we rather rejoice thereat, and endeavour to attain what they possess: so neither will it hurt us to see, that in this exile it is possible for so great a God to communicate Himself to a few miserable worms; and for so excellent a goodness and so immense a mercy to love them. I consider it certain, that whoever shall receive any harm by believing it possible for God in this land of exile to bestow such favours, stands in great need of humility and the love of his neighbour. . . . . Some may say, these things seem impossible, and that it is good not to scandalize the weak. But the harm is *less* for these not to believe them, than to neglect doing a benefit to those on whom God bestows those favours, and who will excite themselves the more to love *Him* who shows them such mercy. . . . Our Lord exceedingly loves not to have His works limited." * D'Andilly remarks, in answer to the objection that this work is unintelligible, "Cette pensée a jusqu'ici empêché presque tout le monde de le lire. On s'imagine que ce ne sont que des spéculations si élevées, que l'on n'y peut rien comprendre. Cependant je suis per-

* "The First Mansions," chap. 1.

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suadé que quelques sublimes qu'elles soient, on ne laissera pas de les entendre: et elles se trouvent mêlées de tants d'instructions excellentes, pour ce qui regarde la pratique des vertus, qu'elles ne sauraient être que très-utiles." Whoever carefully peruses the work will, I am sure, be convinced of the truth of this remark. How many excellent practical exhortations the book contains; and these, too, are recommended and enforced by a vigour, majesty, and purity of language which is truly astonishing! It is far superior in many respects to her Life. S. Antonio * considers it *the best* of all the other admirable works of the saint. F. Collombet says, "that though the 'Interior Castle' is one of the last monuments of the piety of this great woman, and though it was written in the midst of troubles and afflictions of all kinds, yet it will always bear the impress of her wonderful genius. One is astonished at the vigour and grandeur with which several of the chapters are written," † &c. Ribera says of it: "The reader will find in this book admirable learning, and will plainly see with what great excellence, and majesty of style, and force of examples she conducts a soul to the very gates into which she herself enters, raising her from one degree to another to her very centre, which is the Seventh Mansion, the Palace of the Celestial Spouse and the King of Glory, Jesus

* "Tanto profunda contiensi in quello la dottrina, tanta è la politezza, e la maestà dello stile; tanta è la chierezza colla quale viene spiegando i più sublimi, e ignoti arcani della contemplazione, che a tutta ragionevolezza quest' opera porta il vanto sopra tutte le altri di Teresa," &c.—"Vita di Santa Teresa," lib. iv. cap. x. Roma, 1837.

† "Vie de Sainte Térèse," p. 264.

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Christ."* The Ven. Father Avila,† in a letter addressed to the holy Mother, praises and approves in the highest terms the doctrine concerning prayer, and her account of visions, interior speeches, raptures, &c., which are mentioned in this and other works of the saint. Yepez, Palafox, our own Alban Butler,‡ and the learned writers of the last magnificent volume of the Bollandists, Father Gracian, St. Peter of Alcantara, St. John of the Cross, St. Lewis Bertrand, St. Francis Borgia, F. Baltazar Alvarez, Father Ripalda, F. Vicenzo Varron, and Dr. Hernandez, both consultors of the Inquisition,—all these and several other learned and celebrated men have exceedingly extolled the "Interior Castle" as a production that one might almost style "*inspired.*"

To enable the reader to understand the book, I would recommend a diligent perusal of Cardinal Bona's "Via Compendii ad Deum," and also his celebrated treatise, "De Discretione Spirituum." Father Baker, also, in his "Sancta Sophia," has some excellent and valuable remarks on visions and raptures.§ No one, it seems to me, should attempt to say anything on mystical theology, unless he understand the subject *thoroughly*. But who can be a greater authority in this most difficult science than St. Teresa? "She is pre-eminently its Evangelist and Doctor. God gave her a particular faculty, among

* "Vita S. Matris Teresiæ," lib. iv. cap. 17.

† See Appendix, No. 1.

‡ With Alban Butler, I may also add the illustrious Bishop Milner. See his preface to St. Teresa's Exclamations. London, 1790.

§ See Treat. 3, p. 265.

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her other sublime gifts, for translating her vast internal experience of the mystic life into intelligible language; and also of conveying what others might have felt or known, but had never been able to express, by means of ideas and illustrations at once apposite and familiar. The most remarkable feature in the writings of St. Teresa is, that vigorous, practical good sense which pervades whatever she says, and whatever she advises. How practical, for instance, is the fourth chapter of the Seventh Mansion! And, indeed, in almost every chapter of the same work, the saint takes an opportunity of inculcating humility, a knowledge of ourselves, obedience, meekness, charity, zeal for souls, a horror for sin, and an ardent love of God. There is nothing vague or uncertain about what she says. Her language is of the most real, decided, and definite character. That there is in this great work things far beyond the depth of almost all readers, is most true. But are there not most difficult things, "hard to be understood," in the Holy Scriptures also? Alas! for him who reads nothing—but what he understands. How many things are there which one *may* understand and practise in the Interior Castle; and how perfect will they become who practise what they do understand, and who nourish their faith with what they do not understand!"*

The saint commenced this book at Toledo, on Trinity Sunday, in the year 1577; she finished it the same year at Avila. It was composed in obedience to her confessor, the Rev. Dr. Velasquez, who was

* Extract from a letter written by Bishop Ullathorne.

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afterwards Bishop of Osma. F. Gracian also united his command with that of Dr. Velasquez. The year 1577 was the very period in which the saint was engaged with the reformation of her Order; and those who know her wonderful history will remember all the labours, sufferings, and persecutions she had then to endure. In addition to these, she was oppressed with bodily pains and infirmities, of which we can now have no idea. In her Preface, she mentions having had, for three months, such a noise and weakness in her head, that she wrote with pain and difficulty even on urgent business. And yet in the midst of all her troubles and infirmities, she was able to compose, with the greatest calmness and ease, the present sublime work. How well did Teresa know and understand the power of holy obedience.

For the convenience of the reader, I will endeavour to give a summary of what is contained in the "Mansions;" but we should remember the words of the saint: "Our Lord grant that I may say something well, since *that is exceedingly difficult* which I wish you to understand, unless there be experience." (Chap. I.)

In the "First Mansions," the saint speaks of the beauty and dignity of a soul in grace. She considers the soul to be a castle "of diamonds or most clear crystal, in which are many rooms, as in heaven there are many mansions."* She dwells at some length on the means whereby we may enter this castle, remarking, however, that there is a great difference between one room and another. Some only dwell

* Hence the title "Castillo, o Las Moradas." Our Lord himself gave her this title.

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round the castle, never caring to enter, nor to know "what is within that precious place, nor who lives there." Mental prayer she calls the "Gate of this castle." She then proceeds to show with what attention and devotion we ought to address the Majesty of God. In the second chapter of the same mansion, the saint speaks of the deformity of a soul in mortal sin, and this she does in powerful and energetic words, as no doubt our Lord often revealed to her the miserable condition of a soul in this state. She insists on the necessity of knowing ourselves, and thus in this First Mansion, consisting of two chapters, those souls are described who have already some good desires; who pray mentally or vocally, though not so often nor with such great attention as they ought, because they are distracted with worldly pleasures and the cares of business, which the saint calls "noisome and venomous creatures."* When such souls know their condition, they seek help by prayer, and by humility. This second chapter is written with wonderful energy, unction, and clearness. Her Lessons of Perfection are most practical.

The "Second Mansions" contain only one chapter. In it the saint dwells on the great importance of perseverance, in order to be able to arrive at the last mansion. Here, souls are described, who, by reflecting on their present dangerous state, have partly reformed themselves through God's assistance.

But they cannot yet conquer their will so far, as to avoid the occasions of sin. Hence, not being perfectly dead to themselves, they endure great afflic-

* "Cosas ponzoñosas. . . . Fieras y bestias," &c.

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tions and terrible combats. Still they are called by God in many ways; by pious books, sermons, discourses, sickness, and adversity. The arts and snares which the devil employs, to induce the poor soul to return back, are most skilfully exposed in this chapter. The "Third Mansions" contain two chapters. The saint begins by showing what little security we have in this life, even though we should have reached a high degree of perfection.* Here, she exemplifies in herself the words of the Psalmist: "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord." So penetrated is the saint with this holy fear, that she assures her daughters "she trembles at the judgments of God, when she reflects on her past wickedness." "Pray," she exclaims, "pray, my daughters, that His Majesty may ever live in me, for otherwise what security can a life like mine have, which has been so ill spent."

She then proceeds to describe those souls who have overcome the great difficulties that are found in the "Second Mansions." They avoid the occasions of sinning, and even abstain from many venial sins; they are lovers of penance, prayer, and recollection, and sometimes they enjoy great content and tenderness, and have the gift of tears,† &c. These souls,

* "Harto gran miseria es—vivir en vida, que siempre hemos de andar como los que tienen los enemigos à la puerta, que ni pueden dormir ni comer sin armas; y siempre con sobresalto, si por alguna parte pueden desportillar fortaleza.

"O! Señor mio, y bien mio! como quereys que se desse vida tan miserable? Que no es possible dexar de querer y pedir saqueys della," &c. Cap. 1.

† "Destas por la Bondad del Señor creo ay muchas en el mundo; son muy desseosas de no offender à su majestad: aun de los pecados veniales se guardan: de hazar penitencia amigas y de sus horas de recogimiento: gastan bien el tiempo, exercitandose en obras de caridad con los proximos," &c. Cap. 1.

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however, are often troubled with "Aridities," and are frequently quite discouraged by them, and consequently are very desirous of being delivered from them. She speaks on this point at some length, and takes occasion most earnestly to recommend humility to such souls. The latter part of this first chapter is exceedingly useful, because exceedingly *practical.* In the second chapter, the saint continues to speak of aridities in prayer. She makes use of some apposite illustrations to explain her meaning, and again recommends humility and a conformity with the will of God in all things. "Perfection does not consist in wearing the religious habit, but in the practice of virtue, and in subjecting our will in every thing to that of God." (Chap. II.)

In the "Fourth Mansions," the saint reaches the very height of sublimity. The Holy Spirit evidently has guided her pen in this and the following mansions. In the Fourth Mansions, souls are advanced to the First Degree of Supernatural Prayer. She speaks of the difference between "Contents and Delights."* Those she calls contents which we acquire by meditations and prayer to our Lord, being satisfied, however, by God. Contents proceed from the particular virtuous action which we exercise, and which it seems we have gained by our labour. The same joy and content, however, we often feel from worldly things, as the saint remarks, though divine contents have a nobler origin. "Delights" come from God, and nature feels them. The saint proceeds to explain

* "Diria aqui de la differencia que ay entre 'Contentos' en la oracion, y 'Gustos.'"

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how she experienced these "Delights" in meditation, especially when she meditated on the passion of our Lord. She enters more into details in the second chapter, to which I refer the reader, not daring to make use of any words of my own to explain a subject so sublime. In the third chapter she teaches, that quiet or recollection, in which the soul remains inactive and without sentiments of God, is an illusion, because in all Supernatural Prayer the soul is active and vigorous, and is filled with lively sentiments of God. Here, the saint pre-condemns the fanaticism of the Quietists. The saint shows, that these "Delights" should *not* be desired, for several reasons. In the third chapter, the saint explains what is meant by the Prayer of Recollection; she describes its effects, and wonderful indeed they are. This chapter can easily be understood, if perused attentively and devoutly.

In the "Fifth Mansions" are souls still more united to God, by having the interior faculties of the soul, and also the exterior senses, totally suspended, so that the understanding is not able to think on anything but God. The body, too, is deprived of speech, motion, and even sensible breathing, though this lasts but for a short time. The soul feels in her interior a most inexpressible delight and love for God, though she cannot express this delight. Here, the soul is admitted into the very chamber of the King; here, she is caressed by Him; here, she is filled with the plenty of His house, and drinks of the torrent of His pleasures; here, too, secrets of the invisible world are revealed to her, which mortal lips

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can never utter. The soul is certain that God is intimately present with her, for the saint says; "God so fixes and settles Himself in the interior of the soul, that when she comes to herself, she can in no way doubt but she was in God, and God in her. This truth is so deeply rooted in her, that though many years pass before God bestow the like favours upon her, she never forgets it." The saint concludes the first chapter in these words: "O! my daughters, what great things shall we see, if we look upon nothing else but our own baseness and misery, and utter unworthiness to be the servants of so great a Lord, whose wonders are above our comprehension. May He be eternally praised. Amen."*

The favours bestowed in the "Fifth Mansions" are, however, often accompanied or followed by many afflictions, corporal pains and infirmities, and an impatient longing after the enjoyment of God, whose inexpressible beauty is now discovered to her. She mentions the means whereby a soul may attain a supernatural union, viz., by conforming ourselves in all things to the will of God, and by loving our neighbour as ourselves.

The "Sixth Mansions" contain eleven chapters. Here the saint seems to excel herself, by the clearness and majesty with which she treats the most difficult and sublime subjects. Visions are seen by the soul, in which heavenly truths and many wonderful secrets are more frequently revealed to her.

* "O hijas, que mucho veremos—sino queremus ver mas de nuestra baxeza y miseria, que no somos dignos de ser siervos de un Señor tan grande; que no podemos alcanzar sus maravillas. Sea por siempre alabado. Amen."

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she hears certain "words or discourses," and is certain they are not fancies of the imagination. She perceives intellectually our Lord, though without any visible shape. Some of the saints also are seen, either silent or speaking to her; and such visions sometimes continue many days. Raptures likewise are frequent, and in these sometimes the body is raised, without knowing whither it goes, or who carries it, or how, &c. This is not the place to enter at length into the subject of these wonders, nor to answer the objections of Protestants, most of whom pride themselves in rejecting everything supernatural as "absurd or impossible." They believe the Almighty does not condescend to be so familiar with poor mortals; that it is impossible for Him to speak to the soul, except through the medium of the *corporeal senses;* that St. Teresa was evidently an enthusiast, and had imposed upon her superiors, &c. Cardinal Bona has ably answered these and other objections, in his learned and valuable treatise, "De Discretione Spirituum;"* the Protestant reader should also peruse the able remarks of Mr. A. Woodhead, in his preface to the translation of St. Teresa's works. When the saint was canonized by Pope Gregory XV. these Visions and Raptures were examined and sifted by the most holy and learned men of the age, and pronounced to be authentic, and not illusions.† In such matters, we Catholics do not measure our belief by the rules of *philosophy*, nor do we exclaim "How can this be?" We know that

* See Appendix (No. II).
† See "Acta Canonizat." in the Bollandists.

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God's ways are not *our* ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts, and that all things are possible with Him. Thank God, we belong to a Church that does not reject the wonders of the supernatural life, in spite of the sneers and scoffs of the sceptic and infidel. We ponder on the Visions and Raptures of St. Teresa with deep and reverential amazement, giving thanks to our Lord that in this sinful and miserable world of ours, there once dwelt a soul whom He caressed as the "apple of his eye," whom He raised to so marvellous a knowledge and experience of His own adorable perfections, and in whose life He displayed so signally the might of His boundless power and goodness, and the inexhaustible riches of His mercy.

In the "Seventh Mansion" the saint continues in the same sublime strain. She explains the difference between "spiritual union and spiritual marriage." In the third chapter are described the extraordinary effects which follow from these favours. The soul perceives in her interior the presence of the adorable Trinity; but this without any rapture or suspension of the senses or other faculties. The soul then arrives at perfect contemplation. The fourth and last chapter is exceedingly practical. In the concluding paragraph the saint says, that though she has spoken only of "Seven Mansions," "yet in each of these mansions there are many more—above, below, and on the sides, together with many fair gardens, fountains, and other delights," &c. She submits her works "to the judgment of the Holy Catholic Roman Church, wherein (she says) I live, and do protest and promise to live and die."

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Such is the short summary I have given of this sublime work; but how imperfect is it! The truth is, it is impossible to do justice to the subject. One must have a deep knowledge of Mystical Theology to speak with any degree of correctness and certitude. I acknowledge my ignorance, my poor ability to say anything deserving the attention of my superiors. My only desire and ambition have been, to give a faithful translation of the saint's words. Whether I have succeeded, others will decide; but whatever faults or defects may be noticed, I trust to the kind indulgence of the reader, who will, I hope, make every allowance, when he considers what a difficult task it must have been to translate so sublime a work.* Indeed, I should never have been able to translate many parts, had I not consulted the translation made with such ability by the illustrious convert Mr. A. Woodhead.† I have carefully endeavoured to make use of the *singular* pronoun, when any prayer or exclamation is addressed to our Lord.

JOHN DALTON.

P.S.—The next translation from the saint's works will be her admirable "*Letters.*" I should be glad to receive any suggestions as to the propriety of translating them *all.*

* As a proof how exceedingly difficult the original is, see Appendix, No. III.

† For a sketch of the life of this great man, see Appendix, No. II., in the translation of the saint's Life. Dolman.

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PREFACE OF ST. TERESA.

Among the things which I have been commanded to do under obedience, few have proved so difficult to me as writing at present something on prayer; and this for two reasons, because it seems to me our Lord does not give me spirit, nor a desire to write, and also because I have had, for the last three months, such a noise in my head, attended with extreme weakness, that I write with pain, even on necessary business.

But knowing the power of obedience, which makes things easy that seem impossible, my will is determined to undertake the work very cheerfully, though nature seems exceedingly averse to it, because our Lord has not given me such virtue that I should be able to accomplish the task, considering how I have to endure continual sickness, and how many different employments occupy my time, without great resistance on the part of nature. May he be pleased to accomplish the work, who has performed other more difficult things for me; in His mercy I trust.

I am confident I shall be able to say little more, than what I have said on other matters about which I have been commanded to write; I am even fearful lest what I may say should be almost the same; for as birds which learn to speak know no more than just what is taught them or what they hear, and this

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they often repeat, so do I in like manner. Hence, if our Lord wishes me to say anything *new*, His Majesty will teach it to me, or will be pleased to recall to my mind what I have said elsewhere. Even this would satisfy me, because I have such a bad memory, and I should be glad to touch upon some of those things which people say have been correctly handled, lest perhaps they might be lost.

If our Lord should not please to grant me this favour, however much I may weary myself and increase the pain in my head by obedience, I shall be a gainer, even though no fruit whatever should come from what I say. Wherefore I commence the work this day, being the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity, in the year 1577, in order to obey the command given to me; and I am now living in the Convent of St. Joseph of Mount Carmel, at Toledo.

I submit in all that I shall say to the judgment of those who have commanded me to write, because they are persons of great learning. If, perchance, I shall say anything which does not exactly agree with what the Holy Catholic Church holds, it will be through ignorance, and not in malice. This may be taken for certain, since I have always been, am, and shall be, by the grace of God, subject to her voice. May our Lord be eternally blessed and glorified. Amen.

I have been told by those who commanded me to write this book, that as the nuns of this Convent of our Lady of Mount Carmel require some one to explain to them certain doubts regarding prayer, they thought that as women understand one another's language best, and the nuns love me, what I should say would do them more good than the words of others; for these reasons, they considered it very important that I should undertake to say something on the subject. Hence, I consider that, in what I

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write, I am speaking only to them; for it seems foolish to think that my words can be of service to *others*. Our Lord will do me a great favour, if any one among the nuns shall hereby be moved to praise Him ever so little more. His Majesty knows well I have no other object. It is very evident, that when I happen to say anything to the point, people will know it is not mine, since there is no reason to think so. But they will discover in me a very poor capacity for such things, unless our Lord, through His mercy, shall give me understanding.

TERESA DE JESUS.

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THE INTERIOR CASTLE;

OR,

MANSIONS.

THE FIRST MANSIONS.

CHAPTER I.

THE SAINT SPEAKS OF THE BEAUTY AND DIGNITY OF OUR SOULS, AND MENTIONS THAT THE GATE OF THIS CASTLE IS PRAYER.

WHEN I was once requesting our Lord to speak for me, because I knew not what to say, nor how to commence obeying [my Superior *], what I shall now relate occurred to me. But in order that I may begin on some foundation, let us consider our soul as a castle, composed entirely of diamonds, or very clear crystal, in which there are many rooms, just as in Heaven there are many mansions.

If we consider the subject properly, sisters, we shall see that the soul of a just man is nothing else but a Paradise, wherein the Lord thereof takes His recreation. What a [beautiful] room then ought *that* to be, think you, in which a King so powerful, so wise, so pure, so full of every perfection, delights Himself? I know of nothing to which I can compare the great beauty of a soul, and its wonderful capacity. Truly, however enlarged our understanding may be, it is unable to comprehend the beauty of a soul, just as it cannot comprehend who God is; for He saith Himself, that He created us to His own image and likeness.

* Not in the original.

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If this then be the truth, as it certainly is, we need not weary ourselves in endeavouring to understand the beauty of this castle; for though between it and God there is the same difference that exists between the Creator and the creature, yet in order to understand the great dignity and beauty of the soul, it is sufficient that His Majesty has said, He made it after His own image. It is a great source of misery and confusion to us that we do not know ourselves.* Would it not be gross ignorance, my daughters, for some one, on being asked who he was, not to know who was his father or mother, or what country he was born in? If this then would be great stupidity,† how much greater without comparison is *that* which is found in us, when we do not strive to know what we are, but fix all our thoughts on these bodies of ours! and thus only generally and superficially do we know that we have souls, because we have heard so, and because our faith tells us; but seldom do we consider what great things are contained in this soul, or who lives within it, or how immense is its value: hence it is that we take such little care to preserve its beauty; all our attention is fixed on the roughness of the case,‡ or the walls of this castle, which are our bodies.

Let us imagine, then, that this castle (as I have said) has several mansions, or rooms; some above, some below, and others on the sides, and that in the centre of all these is the *principal* room, in which subjects of the greatest secrecy are discussed between God and the soul. You should often reflect on this comparison; for perhaps our Lord may be pleased that I should help you by means thereof, to understand something regarding those favours He is pleased to bestow on souls, and what difference there

* "No es pequeña lastima y confusion, que por nuestra culpa no entendamos à nosotras mesmas."

† "Si esto seria gran bestialidad."

‡ "Todo se nos va en la grosseria del engaste."

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is in them; this I may be able to explain, as far as my understanding can reach; but it is impossible for one to understand them all, because there are many, and how much more for a person so ignorant as I am? To you, however, this will be a great consolation, whenever our Lord shall make you understand these favours; and this is possible: but for those on whom He is not pleased to bestow this gift, it may nevertheless serve as an occasion of praising His immense goodness. For as the contemplation of the joys of heaven, and those things which the blessed enjoy, does us no harm, but we rather rejoice in the contemplation, and endeavour to attain what they possess; so neither will it hurt us to consider, how in this land of exile it is possible for so great a God to communicate Himself to such miserable worms as we are, and for such immense goodness and boundless mercy to love us.

I consider it certain, that whoever shall consider he might receive harm by believing it possible for God in this exile to bestow such favours, such a person stands in great need of humility and love for his neighbour. How can we otherwise help rejoicing that God bestows these favours on a brother of ours, when we see that this does not hinder Him from bestowing the same on us? His Majesty sometimes bestows them only in order to manifest them, as He said concerning the blind man to whom He restored his sight, when the apostles asked whether that blindness came through his own sins, or the sins of his parents. Hence it is that He bestows these favours, not because those to whom He gives them are more holy than those to whom he does not give them, but merely to show His greatness (such as was the case in St. Paul and Mary Magdalen), and that we may praise Him in His creatures.

Some may say; "these things seem impossible, and that it is good not to scandalize the weak." I reply, that the loss is *less* for these not to believe

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such wonders than to forbear doing good to those on whom God bestows them, and who will thereby excite themselves the more to love Him who shows them such mercy, and whose power and majesty are so great. This I may do the more, because I know I speak to those who are in no danger [of taking scandal]; and they know and believe also, that God gives even far greater proofs of His love. I know that he who will not believe this, will never find it by experience in himself; for our Lord is exceedingly desirous not to have His works limited: and thus, sisters, let this never happen to any of you whom our Lord shall not lead in this way.

Returning now to our beautiful and delightful castle, we must consider how we are to enter it. I may here seem to speak incorrectly, because if this castle be the soul, it is clear there is no need to enter it, since it is the castle itself; just as it would appear ridiculous to tell a person to go into a room, when he is in it already. But you must understand that there is a great difference between one room and another; for many souls dwell near the walls of a castle, viz. where the guards are, and yet never care about going further into it; neither do they wish to know what is within that precious place, nor who lives there, nor what rooms there are. Now you have heard or read in some books of prayer, "that a soul is advised to enter into herself," and this is the same that I say here.

A very learned man told me, not long ago, that souls, without the exercise of prayer, are like a body that has the palsy, or that is lame; and though it has feet and hands, it cannot use them. In like manner, some souls are so weak, and so immersed in exterior things, that they cannot by any means enter into themselves; for being always accustomed to converse with the "vermine"* that are about the

* This word is explained in the Preface.

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castle, they are become almost like to them; and though by nature they are so richly endowed, and enabled to hold communication even with God himself, yet they do not recover themselves. Now, unless these souls endeavour to understand and remedy their great misery, they must continue statues of salt, like Lot's wife, being unable to turn their head.

As far as I can understand, the gate by which we are to enter this castle is prayer and consideration. I speak of mental as well as vocal: being prayer, it should be made with attention; for she who does not consider with whom she speaks, and what she asks, and who she is that asks, and of whom she asks, knows little of prayer, however much her lips may move. And though sometimes prayer is made when there is no actual advertence, yet this attention is requisite at other times. But whoever shall accustom himself to speak with the majesty of God, as he would talk with his slave, without considering whether he speaks properly or no, but who speaks only what comes first into his head, or what he may have learnt by heart by having repeated it at other times, —this I do not consider to be prayer: and God grant that no Christian may pray in this manner among you, my sisters. I hope in His Majesty this will never happen, on account of the custom we have of being exercised in interior matters,—for this is a very good means of not falling into the like stupidity.

Let us not, then, speak of these maimed souls,* who suffer great misery, and run great hazards, unless our Lord himself come and bid them rise up, as He did to the man that had frequented the pool for eight-and-thirty years. But let us address those other souls who at length enter the castle; — for though they may be deeply immersed in the world, yet they have good desires, and sometimes, though seldom, they recommend themselves to God; they

* "Con estas almas tullidas," &c.

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consider what they are, though not so seriously and so calmly as they should; they pray sometimes in a month, with a mind full of a thousand distractions and cares: this is generally the case, — for they are so wedded to earthly things, that having placed therein their treasure, their heart is there also: they sometimes try to free themselves from these cares,— and this knowledge of themselves is very beneficial, since they discover they do not go the right way to enter in at the gate.

At last they enter into the first rooms below, but so much "vermine" with them, that they are prevented from seeing the beauty of the castle, nor can they be at rest. It is well that they have entered.

What I have been saying may seem to you unnecessary, my daughters, since by the goodness of our Lord *you* are not to be numbered amongst these. But you must have patience, because I know not how to make you understand some interior things about prayer which I have learnt, except by this means. Our Lord grant that I may be able to say something well, since that is exceedingly difficult which I wish to make you understand, unless there is experience. If there be, you will see that less cannot be done than to touch on *that*, which God grant, in his great mercy, may never happen to us.

CHAPTER II.

THE SAINT SHOWS HOW DEFORMED A SOUL IN MORTAL SIN IS, AND SPEAKS OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF OURSELVES, ETC.

Before I proceed further, I wish you to consider what a spectacle it is to behold this castle, so resplendent and beautiful,—this oriental pearl, — this tree of life, which is planted amidst the living waters of life,—that is, God:—what a spectacle is it when it

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falls into mortal sin! No darkness is more dark, nor is anything so black and foul as such a soul. You need not wish to know more than to know that the sun itself, which gave it such lustre and beauty, though still in the centre of it, is, nevertheless, as if it were not there; and yet that soul is as capable of enjoying His Majesty, as a crystal rejoices in the brightness of the sun. Nothing does that soul good; and hence all her good works are fruitless, as long as she remains in mortal sin; neither are they of any help towards enabling her to arrive at [eternal] glory; because such works, not coming from God as from their source (whence our virtue becomes virtue), cannot be pleasing in his eyes, when we are separated from Him; for the intention of him who commits a mortal sin is not to please God, but the *devil*, who being obscurity and darkness itself, the poor soul likewise becomes darkness itself.

I know a person to whom our Lord was pleased to reveal the state of a soul in mortal sin: the person said that she thought if men only considered and understood well such a state, no one would commit a sin, even though we were to suffer the greatest torments possible, in order to avoid the occasions. The person, accordingly, became exceedingly desirous that all men should understand this truth. I also wish, my daughters, that *you* would excite yourselves earnestly to beseech our Lord for those who are in this miserable state, for they are all darkness, and so are their works also.

As all the streams are clear that issue from a clear fountain (such is a soul in a state of grace; and hence it is that all her works are so pleasing in the eyes of God and men, because they proceed from this fountain of life, in which it is planted like a tree, and it would have neither verdure nor fruit, except it received them hence: this tree sustains it, and makes it continually bear good fruit); so, on the contrary, when a soul by her own fault separates herself from

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this fountain, and is planted in another containing foul and stinking water, all that flows from it is foul and fetid too.

But we should understand that this fountain and this resplendent sun, which is in the centre of the soul, lose not their brightness and glory, for these always remain in it, and nothing can take away its beauty. But if any one should throw a black cloth over a crystal which is exposed to the sun, it is evident that, though the sun may shine upon it, it will have no effect on the crystal.

O souls! redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, know and pity yourselves. How is it possible that, knowing this truth (as you do), you do not endeavour to take away the pitch from this crystal? Consider how, when once your life is ended, you will never return any more to enjoy this light. O Jesus! what a misery is it to behold a soul separated from and deprived of this light! What miserable objects are the poor mansions of the soul! How disordered are the senses! What wretched people are they who live in them! With what blindness and bad government do the powers rule, which are the commanders, stewards, and waiters! *

But as the soil in which the tree is planted is the devil, what fruit can be produced? I once heard a spiritual man say "that he wondered not so much at the evil which a person committed who was in mortal sin, as at what he did not commit." † May God, in his mercy, deliver us from so great an evil, for while we live in this life, sin only deserves the name of evil, since it brings upon us eternal evils. This, my daughters, is what we ought to fear, and from which we must beseech God, in our prayers, to free us; for "unless he keep the city, in vain shall we labour," since we are nothing but misery itself.

* "Mæstresala" is the chief waiter at the king's table.

† "Que no se espantaba de cosas que hiziesse uno que està en pecado mortal, sino de lo que no hazia."

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The person mentioned above said "that she had received two benefits from the favour God had bestowed upon her, in showing her the miserable state of a soul in mortal sin." The first was, an exceedingly great fear of offending him, and therefore she was continually beseeching Him not to let her fall, as she saw such dreadful evil would follow. The second benefit was, that she obtained thereby a looking-glass to excite humility in her, for she knew that the good which we do is not originally from ourselves, but from the fountain in which this tree of our souls is planted, and from this sun which gives heat to our actions. She said this was represented so clearly to her, that when she did any good action, or saw one done by another, she had recourse to this principle,* and perceived how without this aid we could do nothing; hence it was that she immediately broke forth into the praises of God, and in general did not remember herself in any good action which she did.

The time would not be lost, sisters, which either you spent in reading or I in writing this, if we did but gain these two benefits, which learned and sensible persons know very well; but the dulness of us women stands in need of all this. Hence our Lord is perhaps pleased that such comparisons should come to our mind: may his goodness be pleased to help us herein.

These interior subjects are so difficult to understand, that whoever knows no more than I do is compelled to say many superfluous and foolish things, in order to mention a few things which may be useful. Whoever reads this must have patience, since I have it by writing what I do not understand. I sometimes take the pen in my hand, like a foolish creature, not knowing what to say, nor how to begin.

I know very well that it is very important for you, that I should explain to you some interior matters

* That is, God.

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as well as I can, since we always hear it said, "What a good thing prayer is;" and we are bound by our rule to use it so many hours, and yet it is not explained to us. Little is mentioned to us regarding what we ourselves can do in it, and respecting those things which our Lord operates in a soul—I mean supernaturally. As this little is presented to our understandings in many and different ways, it will be a great consolation to us to take a view of this heavenly, internal edifice, which is so little understood by mortals, though many walk through it. And though in other things which I have written, our Lord has enabled me to understand something, yet I have since discovered some things I did not understand so well as I do now, especially those which are more difficult. The difficulty is, that many things already well known must be said, in order to understand these other matters; my poor understanding knows no other way.

Let us then now return to our castle of many mansions. You must not contemplate these rooms as one behind another, well arranged and in good order, —rather cast your eyes on the centre, which is the lodging or palace where the King is; and consider that as in a pine-apple, before we come to the kernel which is to be eaten, there are many skins which cover and enclose it; so here about this chamber there are many mansions, and *over* it likewise there are many, because things relating to the soul are always to be considered with a certain fulness and greatness, since too much cannot be said respecting the soul, which is capable of much more than we are able to imagine. The sun which is in this palace, communicates itself to all the parts thereof.

It is very important for a soul which makes use of prayer, whether it be little or much, that persons should not confine or straiten her, but let her walk freely through all these rooms, above, below, and on the sides, seeing God has bestowed on her so great a

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dignity. Let her not force herself to remain long in one room only, though it be in that of the knowledge of one-self, which is indeed very necessary (see that you understand me), even for those whom our Lord entertains in the same chamber in which he is Himself; for, however favoured they may be, they must know that nothing else can perfect them but prayer, nor will they be able to act otherwise, even should they wish to do so, for humility must always be at work; just as a bee flies abroad and sucks the flowers, so (believe me) may the soul, by this knowledge of herself, sometimes soar above also, to consider the Greatness and Majesty of her God. Here she will the better discover her own baseness than in herself; she will likewise be more free from those insects * that come into the first rooms, viz., those of "the knowledge of oneself," wherein (as I have said) it is a great mercy of God to be exercised, whether this be done more or less, as the saying is. Let them believe me, that by this virtue of God, we shall labour much more vigorously than by being so much tied to the things of earth.

I know not whether I have expressed myself sufficiently clear, for "this knowledge of ourselves" is so very important, that I wish you never to admit any relaxation therein, however highly elevated you may be, because while we live on this earth, nothing is more necessary for us than humility.

I say then again, that it is very good, nay, the very best thing, to enter first into the mansion where this [knowledge] is practised, rather than fly to the others, because this is the way to them; and if we can advance in a safe and smooth path, why should we desire wings to fly? Let us, therefore, endeavour to advance more in this way, for, in my opinion, we shall never be able to know ourselves, except we endeavour to know God. By considering His greatness,

* "Savandijas que entran en las primeras piezas."

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we discover our own baseness; by contemplating His purity, we discover our own filthiness, and beholding His humility, we shall discover how far we are from being truly humble.

Herein is a double gain. The first is, that as a white colour next to a black appears much whiter, and on the contrary, a black near a white colour [so are our imperfections better discovered by being contrasted with the divine perfections].* The second is, that our understanding and will are ennobled thereby, and more disposed to every good, in meditating by turns both on ourselves and on God; for never to rise from the mire of our own miseries is very injurious to us. As we said of those in mortal sin, that those streams are very black and fetid, so the same may be said here; for though they be not so bad as these (may God deliver us from that, for I speak by a comparison); yet, by dwelling continually on the misery of our body, the stream will never run clear on account of the mud of fears and of cowardice (which will come upon us), for we may be inclined to consider "whether others notice us or not; whether some evil may not happen to us if we go along this way; whether it be pride in us to attempt such and such a work; whether it be good for one, so miserable as I am, to think about applying myself to so high a matter as prayer; whether people will think better of me for not going along the way every one else goes; that extremes, even in virtue, are not good; that being so base a sinner, my fall from such a height might be greater; that perhaps I should not go forward, and might injure some others who were good; that such a person as I am need not be singular," &c.

O! my daughters! how many souls has the devil utterly ruined by this way! All this seems humility to them, and many other things that I could say,

* These words I have added to make the sense clearer.

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which arise from not understanding ourselves, for the knowledge of ourselves sometimes confuses us, if we never get out of ourselves. I am not surprised that this, and much more, are so much dreaded.

I say then, daughters, that we must fix our eyes on Christ, our only good, and there we shall learn true humility; let us also consider His saints. I said, our understanding must be ennobled, and thus the knowledge of ourselves will not make it base and cowardly; for although this be the first mansion, yet it is exceedingly rich, and so very valuable, that whoever can get free from the insects therein, will not fail to advance further. Terrible are the wiles and stratagems of the devil—for keeping souls from knowing themselves and understanding their ways.*

From my experience, I could give you many remarkable signs; on this account I say, that you must not consider a few of these rooms only, but a million; for souls enter there by many ways, and all with a good intention. But as the devil always has a bad intention, in every one of these rooms he no doubt keeps many legions of devils to attack souls, and to hinder them from passing from one to another: the poor soul, not knowing this snare, is deluded by him in a thousand ways, though he cannot so easily act thus with regard to those who are nearer the King's palace. But here, as they are yet immersed in the world and engulfed in its pleasures, and deceived by its honours and ambition, the guards of the soul (which are the senses and faculties which God has given her) have no strength of their own, and hence these souls are easily conquered. Though these be desirous of not offending God, and perform good works, yet they who shall see themselves in this state stand in need of approaching nearer, by degrees, to the [divine] Majesty, and of taking the Blessed Virgin

* "Terribles son los ardides y mañas del demonio, para que las almas no se conozcan, ni entiendan sus caminos."

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and the saints for their intercessors, that so they may fight for them, since their servants have little strength to defend them. Indeed, in every state, strength must come from God: may His Majesty grant it to us in his mercy. Amen.

How miserable is the life we live in! But because I have said sufficient elsewhere, daughters, respecting the harm we receive through not understanding the benefit of humility and that of the knowledge of ourselves, I shall say no more here on that subject, though it is very important; our Lord grant that I may have spoken something which has been useful to you.

You must notice that, in these first mansions, there comes little of that light which diffuses itself from the palace wherein the King resides; for they are not dark and black, as is the case when the soul is in mortal sin, yet they are in some degree obscured, so that the light cannot enlighten him who is in these rooms; and this is not through any fault of the room (I know not how to explain myself), but because so many noxious things, such as serpents, lizards, vipers, and venomous creatures enter with him, so as to hinder him from perceiving the light; just as if one should come into a place where the sun shone much, but his eyes were so covered with dirt, that he could hardly open them. The room is lightsome, but he enjoys it not, because these filthy vermin are an impediment; they blind his eyes in such a way that he sees nothing but them. Thus it sometimes seems to be the case with a soul, which though it be not altogether in a bad state, is nevertheless so taken up with the things of this world, and so immersed (as I said) in wealth, honours, and business, that truly if she were desirous of beholding and delighting in her own beauty, they will not allow her to do so, and it seems she cannot escape so many obstacles.

It is very proper, in order to enter into the Second Mansions, that every one should endeavour, according

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to his state, to give up every business which is not necessary. This is so very important for arriving at the principal mansion, that except one begin to do this, I consider it impossible to arrive; and though he may be within the castle, he will not on that account be able to remain in the room, where he is already, without apparent danger, because among so many venomous creatures, it is impossible not to be bitten some time or other.

What an evil, then, would it be, daughters, if those who are free from these stumblings (as we are), who have already entered further into other secret rooms of the castle, should by our own fault return again to these tumults!* On account of our sins, there are many, no doubt, who, after having received great favours from our Lord, have by their own fault relapsed into this misery. Here we are free, as regards the exterior: may our Lord grant we may be the same in our interior also! Be careful, my daughters, to keep ourselves free from other people's business; consider that there are few mansions of this castle in which the devils do not fight. It is true that, in some, the guards, that is, the faculties, have strength to resist the devils; but it is necessary for us not to neglect observing their wiles, that so, when they transform themselves into angels of light, they may not deceive us. There are many things which, insinuating themselves by little and little, may hurt us exceedingly, and we may not perceive the evil till it be past. I have elsewhere told you, that it is like a "deaf file,"† and we must observe it in its beginnings. I will mention some particulars in order to enable you to understand the subject better.

The devil, for instance, suggests to a sister, certain impetuous desires of doing penance, so that she never seems to rest but when she is torturing herself. This

* "Tornassemos à salir à estas barahundas."

† "Como una lima sorda." The saint explains the expression—at least, what she means by it.

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beginning is good; but if the superioress should have commanded that no penance should be done without leave, and the devil should make her believe that for so good an object she may take some liberty, she immediately and secretly enters upon such a course, whereby she in the end loses her health, and is therefore unable to do what the rule commands: then you see what all this apparent good ends in! In another he excites zeal for very great perfection: this is very good; but from this cause, any small fault in the sisters may appear a great crime in *her* eyes, and she may become very anxious to observe whether they commit faults; and not seeing her own, she will be running to the superioress to acquaint her with them, moved thereto by the great zeal she has for discipline. But the rest, not knowing her interior, and seeing her so busy, do not possibly like this conduct very well. That which the devil aims at hereby is no trifle, viz., to cool our charity and mutual love: this would indeed be a great evil.

Let us remember, daughters, that true perfection consists in the love of God and our neighbour; the more perfectly we observe these two precepts, the more perfect we shall be. Our whole rule and constitutions serve for nothing else, but as so many means for enabling us to do this with more perfection. Let us banish such indiscreet zeal as may injure us, and let each one look to herself. But because I have spoken at length on this matter elsewhere, I will not enter into further particulars here. This mutual love is so very important, that I wish you never to forget it; for by noticing in others certain unimportant matters, which sometimes will not prove even imperfections, but we take them perhaps in a bad sense, because we know little [of the person's interior]; the soul may both lose her own peace, and likewise disturb the peace of others. Consider, then, if perfection will cost you dear or no.

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The devil can also raise this temptation against the prioress, and it may prove more dangerous.

Great discretion is therefore necessary; for if faults be committed against the "rules and constitutions," they must not always be passed over, but the superioress should be informed of them; if they are not corrected, the superior* must be told of the matter; and this is charity. Again, if any very serious faults should be found among the sisters, to let such things pass by, through fear lest it might only be a temptation, would itself be a temptation. Great care should be taken, lest the devil might deceive us, not to mention this matter to another person, for thereby the devil may gain much, and introduce a habit of detraction; but speak of it, as I said, to such as can and should remedy the evil. In this place,—glory be to God,—much liberty is not allowed for it, on account of the continual silence which is observed.

* That is, the Bishop.

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THE SECOND MANSIONS.

CHAPTER I.

THE SAINT EXPLAINS THE GREAT IMPORTANCE OF PERSEVERANCE, IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO ARRIVE AT THE LAST MANSIONS, ETC.

I WILL now mention what kind of souls those are who enter the "Second Mansions," and what they do therein. I wish to say little, because elsewhere I have entered into many particulars on the subject, and it would be impossible for me to repeat here over again many of the same things, since I do not now remember what I then said. But could I present those same things before you in a different way, I know well they would not tire or displease you, for we are never tired of the books which treat on that subject, though they are numerous.

I say, then, that this Second Mansion is for those who have already begun to make use of prayer, and who understand how important it is for them not to remain in the "First Mansions." But they are not determined to refrain from being often in them, because they do not avoid the occasions, and this fault is very dangerous. It is, however, a great mercy, that sometimes they endeavour to fly from these serpents and poisonous creatures, and that they know it is good to avoid them. These have, in one way, more trouble than those in the First Mansions, though they are not in such danger, because it seems they are already aware of the danger, and they have great hopes of entering further in. I say they have "more trouble," because the persons in the First Mansions are like dumb men who hear nothing, and so they bear the better the misfortune of their not being

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able to speak, which those could not do who hear but cannot speak; yet the being deaf is not therefore the more desirable, for it is a great benefit to understand what is spoken to us. Thus these hear the calls our Lord gives them, because, as they approach nearer to His Majesty, He is a very good neighbour; and so great are His mercy and His goodness, that although we continue to be addicted to our pastimes, employments, and pleasures, and are exposed to conflicts with the devil, now falling and then rising (for these vermin are so poisonous, and such dangerous company, and so restless in their motion, that it would be a wonder not to stumble on them and fall); still, notwithstanding all this, our Lord prizes our loving Him so much, and seeking His company, that He hesitates not, some time or other, to call us to approach nearer to Him. And so sweet is the voice, that the poor soul is dejected, because she does not immediately perform what He commands her, and this (as I have said) is a greater trouble than not to hear His call.

I do not say that these words and calls are like some others which I shall speak of afterwards. They come by discourses heard from good people, or from sermons, or by reading pious books, or many other ways by which we have often heard God call us; such as by sickness and adversity, and also by a certain truth which He teaches us at times of prayer; and however remiss these may be observed, yet they are greatly esteemed by God. Do not, my sisters, make light of this first grace, nor be disconsolate, though you may not immediately correspond with our Lord; for His Majesty knows how to wait many days and years, especially when He sees in us perseverance and good desires. This is that which is most necessary here, because by perseverance we never fail to gain a great deal.

But terrible is the attack which the devil makes here in a thousand different ways, and with more

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grief to the soul than in the former mansion. There she was dumb and deaf; or at least she heard but little and resisted less, as if in some manner she gave up all hope of victory: but here the understanding is more vigilant, and the powers are more wise; and the discharge of the artillery makes such a noise, that the soul cannot help hearing it. Here the devils represent to us these serpents; that is, the things of this world. They wish to persuade us that the pleasures thereof are almost eternal: they place before us the esteem which men have had for us; our friends and relations; our health, which will be ruined by the austerities of penance (for a soul which desires to enter this mansion always begins to desire mortification), and a thousand other such impediments are represented to her.

O Jesus! what disorders do the devils raise here! How great are the afflictions of the poor soul, not knowing whether she should advance, or return to the first room! On one side, reason represents to her what a cheat and a folly it is to imagine all this to be in any way valuable, in comparison with that to which she aspires. Faith teaches her what is sufficient for her. Memory discovers to her what all these things will end in, and represents to her the death of those who once enjoyed abundance of these transitory things, and how she has seen some persons die very suddenly, and how soon they were forgotten by every one; and how she has seen some, whom she knew when they were in great prosperity, now trodden under ground; and when she has passed by their graves, often has she beheld many filthy worms breeding on their bodies, and so with regard to many other things which memory can represent to her. The will inclines her to love Him, in whom she has seen so many proofs of love, some of which she would be glad to repay. It is especially represented to her that His true Lover never departs from her, as He attends her, and gives her life and being.

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The understanding then comes in, and makes her know, that though she should live many years she could not find a better friend (than God); that all the world is full of deceit, and that those pleasures which the devil proposes to her are also full of troubles, cares, and contradictions. It tells her to be confident; that *out* of this castle she will find neither safety nor peace; that she should not go to other houses, since her own is so well provided with good things, if she will only enjoy them; and who enjoys all he requires, so much as she does in her own mansion, especially as she possesses there a guest, who will make her mistress of all blessings, if she do not wander from home, like the prodigal son, who was obliged to feed on swine's flesh?

But, O my Lord and my God! how does our being accustomed to vanity and to the things of the world scatter all these blessings! Faith is so dead, that we love much more what we *see* than what it tells us. We behold indeed nothing but great misery in those who seek after these visible things; and this misery is brought on by those poisonous objects with which we come in contact; for as a person who is bitten by a viper is poisoned and swells all over his body, so it will be the case here, unless we be very careful. It is clear, that great care will be required for our recovery, and God bestowed a high favour upon us if we do not die from the effects. Truly does the soul suffer great afflictions herein, especially if the devil should perceive that she is disposed to go further on; all the powers of hell will then combine together to force her back.

O my Lord! how necessary is thy aid herein, without which nothing can be done! In thy mercy, permit not this soul to be deceived, by leaving off what she has commenced. Give her light to see, that herein all her happiness consists to avoid bad company; it is very important to converse with those who speak on such subjects, and to associate not

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only with those who are in the same rooms where she is, but with those also who she knows have entered further into the rooms nearer (the King); for this will be exceedingly useful to her, and she may converse with them in such a way that they might take her in with them. Let her always be on her guard, lest in this attack she be conquered by yielding, because should the devil find her firmly resolved rather to lose her life, her rest, and all he can offer her, than return back to the first rooms, he will soon leave off attacking her.

Let her be courageous, and not like those, who, when they went out with Gideon to battle, bent themselves down on the ground to drink. Let her remember that she goes out to fight with all the devils, and that there are no better arms than those of the *cross*. Though I have mentioned this in other places, yet I repeat it here again, viz., that the soul must not think she will find in what she now commences ease and pleasure: this would be too mean a kind of beginning, for the erection of so noble and so costly a building. If we should begin to build it upon such sand, it will all fall to the ground, and we shall always be having disgusts and temptations, for these are not the mansions in which manna is rained down; they are further on, where the soul relishes everything as she desires, because she desires nothing but what is pleasing to God.

It is very strange indeed, that though we are full of a thousand impediments and contradictions, and have such (weak) virtues as can scarcely move, being but just born, and God grant they have begun to be born; still we are not ashamed to desire delights in prayer, and to complain of aridities. Never allow this to happen to you, my sisters; embrace the cross, which your Spouse carried on his shoulders, and remember that this should be your motto, viz., "That she who can suffer most for the love of Him, will be the happiest." Let everything else be secondary to

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this; if our Lord shall grant you this favour, give Him many thanks for it.

You may imagine, that as regards exterior trials, you are quite resolved to endure them, provided God may caress you in the interior. But His Majesty knows best what is sufficient for us. He needs no advice as to what He should give us, since He may justly say to us, "You know not what you ask." The principal object of one who begins to make use of prayer (do not forget this, for it is important), should be to endeavour and resolve, and dispose oneself, with all possible diligence, to conform his will to that of God: be assured, as I shall afterwards mention, that herein consists all that high perfection which we should attain in our spiritual progress. The more perfectly we practise this, the more shall we receive from our Lord, and the further shall we advance in this way. Think not that there are herein strange languages and unintelligible things, unheard of before, for in doing God's will consists all our good.

But if we err in the beginning, and desire that God would immediately do *our* will, and lead us according to our fancies, what firmness can this edifice have? Let us endeavour to do all we can, and beware of those poisonous animals, for often does our Lord allow evil thoughts to afflict us, and they do indeed afflict us, without our being able to drive them away; He leaves us in aridities, and sometimes He permits these beasts to bite us, that so we may afterwards learn how to avoid them; and He thus wishes to try whether we are sorry for having offended Him. Be not therefore discouraged, if sometimes you fall; do not neglect to go forward, for from such falls God will draw good, just as he who sells treacle drinks poison first, to prove whether the treacle be good.

When we do not perceive our misery in any other thing, but are sensible of the great harm we receive

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from being distracted and dissipated with regard to exterior things, the mere fact of our enduring this conflict might suffice to make us return to our recollection. Can there *be* a greater evil than not to live in our own house? What hope can we have to find rest in the houses of other people, if we do not enjoy it in our own? But it seems that those most intimate and sincere friends and kindred (I mean the powers of the soul), with whom we must always live, whether we will or no, make war upon us, as if sensible of the rebellion which our vices have raised against them. Peace, peace be to you, my sisters, as our Lord said, to which He frequently exhorted his apostles. But believe me, that if we neither have it, nor endeavour to find it in our own house, we shall not find it in *another* person's house.

By the blood which Christ shed for us, let this war now cease. This I request of those who have not begun to enter into themselves, and also for those who have begun, viz., that they must not allow this war to force them to go back. Let them consider that a relapse is worse than a fall; they already see their ruin; let them confide in God's mercy, and not in themselves, and they shall see how God will lead them on from one mansion to another, and place them in a country where these beasts cannot touch them nor attack them, but where they can subdue them all and laugh at them, and enjoy (even in this life) far greater blessings than they could wish. But as I said at the beginning, I have shown you elsewhere how you should act in these troubles which the devil raises here, and how the commencement of recollection is not to consist in strength of arms, but in sweetness. In order that you may persevere more faithfully, I will say no more here, except to declare my conviction that it is very beneficial to confer with persons of experience. You may, perhaps, think that it is a great loss to omit some things which are not necessary to be done; but if you do not entirely leave

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off prayer, our Lord will direct everything to our profit, though we may find no one to instruct us. There is, however, no remedy for this evil,* but to resume it again, otherwise the soul will lose everything by little and little; and God grant she may understand it.

Some of you may think, that if it be so dangerous to go backwards, it were better never to have entered, but always to remain outside the castle. I have already told you in the beginning, and our Lord himself has said so, "He that loves the danger shall perish in it." The gate for entering this castle is prayer, as I have said.

To think then we shall enter heaven without praying, and entering into ourselves by the knowledge of ourselves and the consideration of our own misery, and what we owe to God, and by often imploring His mercy, is foolishness. Our Lord himself has said, "No one can come to the Father, but by me;" and somewhere else He says, "He that seeth me, seeth the Father also." Now, if we never look at Him, nor consider how much we owe Him, nor the death He suffered for us, I do not understand how we can know Him, or perform works in His service; for what value can faith have without these, and what worth can these have, if not united with the merits of Christ? Neither do I know who can excite us to love this Lord. May His Majesty be pleased to make us know how dearly we have cost Him, and that "the servant is not greater than the master," and that we must *work* in order to enjoy His glory, and for this reason we must pray likewise, that so we may not fall into temptation.

* That is, to give up prayer.

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THE THIRD MANSIONS.

CHAPTER I.

THE SAINT SHOWS WHAT LITTLE SECURITY WE CAN HAVE WHILE WE LIVE IN THIS EXILE, THOUGH WE MAY HAVE REACHED A HIGH DEGREE OF PERFECTION, ETC.

To THOSE who, through the goodness of God, have conquered in these combats, and by perseverance have reached the Third Mansions, what shall we say but these words: "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord?" His Majesty has conferred no small favour upon me, by making me now understand (for otherwise, I have little ability for such things)—the meaning of these words in my own tongue. With reason do we truly call *him* "blessed," since, as far as we can understand, unless he turn back, he is secure of his salvation. Here you see, sisters, how important it is to have conquered in the former battles; for I consider it certain that our Lord never fails to place him, who has arrived so far, in security of conscience, and this is no small happiness. I said "in security of conscience;" but I spoke incorrectly, for there is none in this life; and, therefore, always understand my meaning to be, except he forsake the way he has begun (there is no security). It is, indeed, a very great misery to live in this life where we must always be like those who have their enemies at the gate, who can neither eat nor sleep, but are obliged always to have their arms continually in their hands,—always to be in anxiety and fear, lest the enemy make a breach on some side or other, and become masters of the castle.

O my Lord, my God! how canst Thou wish that a life so miserable should be loved? It is impossible for us to avoid wishing and requesting to be taken

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out of it, were it not for the hope of losing it for Thy sake, or spending it entirely in Thy service, and, above all, because we know it is Thy pleasure (we should live in it). If this be so, my God! let us die with Thee, as St. Thomas said, since to live without Thee, and in the fear of it being possible to lose Thee for ever, is nothing else than to die many times. I tell you, therefore, my daughters, that the blessedness we must ask for is to be at last in security with the blessed; for, amidst these fears, what pleasure can he have who finds no pleasure except in pleasing God? Consider that some of the saints have had a much greater fear than this, and yet they have fallen into grievous sins; nor are we sure that if *we* fall God will stretch out His hand (I mean his especial assistance) to draw us out of them, and that we shall do penance, as those saints did.

I assure you, my daughters, while I am writing these words I am so seized with fear, that I neither know how I write, nor how I live, when I reflect on this subject, and this I very often do. Pray, my daughters, that His Majesty may ever live in me; for otherwise, what security can such a life as mine have, which has been so wicked? Be not afflicted on hearing it has been so, as I have sometimes seen you, when I have thus spoken to you: this comes from your desiring that I should be very holy; and you have reason, for so do I desire. But what can I do, if I lose this holiness through my own fault? I cannot complain of God, that He has not given me sufficient help for the accomplishment of your desires.

I cannot speak thus without tears, nor without extreme confusion, when I see myself writing for those who can even teach me. This is a hard obedience. May our Lord grant, that as it has been performed for His sake, it may in some way prove beneficial to you; and if for nothing else, may it help you to beg pardon of our Lord for this mise-

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rable sinner who is so presumptuous. But His Majesty knows I can only presume on his mercy; and, since I cannot help having been what I was, I have no other remedy but to have recourse to His mercy, and to trust in the merits of His Son, and of the Blessed Virgin his Mother, whose habit you and I wear, though most unworthy of it. Thank Him that you are truly the daughters of this Lady; and, therefore, having so good a Mother, you must not be ashamed of my being so bad. Imitate her, and imagine what the greatness of this Lady must be, and what a great honour it is to have her for our patroness; for my sins, and being such a wretched creature as I am, have not been able to tarnish this holy order in the least.

But I wish to warn you against one thing; viz., not to be too secure, because the order is such, or because you have such a Mother; for David was a great saint, yet you know what Solomon proved; neither should you make much account of the inclosure and penance in which you live; nor let your always conversing with God, or your continual exercise of prayer, make you secure, nor your being so much separated from the world, nor your abhorring worldly things,—all this is very good, but not sufficient, as I have said, to free us from fear. Often, then, remember and meditate on this verse: "Blessed is the man who feareth the Lord."

Having digressed so much, I know not what I was saying; and when I reflect on myself, I am unable to mention anything good, and therefore I will not say any more now on that subject. Returning, then, to what I began to say respecting souls who have come into the Third Mansions, I consider this to be no small favour which our Lord has bestowed upon them, but rather a very extraordinary one, viz., that they have overcome the first difficulties. I believe there are many such souls in the world, who, through the goodness of our Lord, are extremely desirous of

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not offending His Majesty; who keep themselves from venial sin, are lovers of penance and of their hours of recollection and prayer; who spend their time well, and are exercised in works of charity towards their neighbour; who are very regular in their actions and the government of their house,—such, at least, as have families. This is, indeed, a very desirable state, and there seems to be no reason why these should be denied entrance into the very last mansion; nor will our Lord deny it to them, if they be willing, for this is an excellent disposition to induce Him to show them all kind of favours.

O Jesus! who will not exclaim that he is desirous of so great a happiness, especially as he has already conquered the greatest difficulties? Every one must desire it. We all say we desire it. But as something more is required in order that our Lord may take entire possession of the soul, it is not enough to say these words, just as it was not sufficient for that young man whom our Lord asked if he would be perfect? Ever since I began to speak of these mansions, methinks I see him,—for *our* case resembles his. Hence, in a great measure, proceed those great aridities in prayer, though there may be other causes also. I do not speak now of certain internal afflictions, very intolerable, which some good souls endure without any fault of theirs, out of which our Lord always delivered them with great gain to them; neither do I speak of those who are troubled with melancholy and other infirmities: we must not pry into the judgments of God. My opinion is, that what I have mentioned is generally the cause of them; for as these souls see that they would not on any account commit a mortal sin—and many would not wilfully commit even a venial sin—and that they spend their lives well, and make a good use of their property, they cannot with patience endure that the gate should be shut against them, by which they might come into the chamber where the King is, whose

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servants they consider themselves,—and they are really so. But though earthly kings have many subjects, yet they cannot all enter his chamber.

Enter,—enter, my daughters, into your interior, and pass beyond those miserable works of yours, which, on account of your being Christians, you are bound to perform, and much more also. Let it be sufficient that you are God's subjects. Be not desirous of much more. Consider the saints who have entered into the chamber of this King, and you will see by their lives what a difference there is between them and us. Do not demand that which you have not merited; for whatever service we do, we must not think we can merit it,—*we* who have offended God! O humility, humility! I know not what temptation has come upon me herein, for I cannot help believing but that he who heeds these aridities, is in some way wanting in this virtue. I do not wish, as I said, to speak of those great internal afflictions whereof I have already said, that they show a far greater want of humility.

Let us try ourselves, sisters, or let our Lord try us: He can best do it, though we often do not desire to understand it. Coming to those souls who are so well disposed, let us see what they do for God, and we shall soon find we have no reason to complain of His Majesty; for if we turn our back on Him, and go away sad, like the young man in the Gospel, when He tells us what we are to do in order to arrive at perfection, what do we wish His Majesty to do, who will give a reward in proportion to the love we bear Him? This love, my daughters, must not be built on our own fancy, but *proved by works;* yet do not think He stands in need of our works; He only wants a resolute will.

We must not imagine, because we wear the habit of religion, which we have voluntarily taken, and have abandoned all earthly things for God's sake, though they may be only like the poor nets of

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St. Peter (he gives much, however, who gives all he hath), that therefore we have done everything. This is indeed a good disposition, if we persevere in it, and return no more among the insects of the first rooms, though merely in desire; but no doubt she will obtain her object if she persevere in this nakedness and abandonment of all things. But it must be on this condition (and remember, I reminded you of it before), that she consider herself to be "an unprofitable servant," as Christ has said; and think not that our Lord is thereby obliged to bestow such favours upon her, but rather that she having received more, is the more indebted to Him. What can we do for so powerful a God, who died for us, who created us, and continually gives us being, that we should not esteem ourselves happy in discharging some part of what we owe *Him*, who has given us so much and served us—(these words I used unwillingly—I mean "served us," yet it is true, since He did nothing else all the time He lived in the world)—without our asking Him for fresh favours and pleasures?

Consider well, my daughters, some points which I have here marked out for you, though somewhat obscurely, not knowing how to express them better. Our Lord will make you understand them, that you may draw humility from aridities, and not restlessness; for this the devil aims at. Believe me, that wherever this virtue is really found, though our Lord may give no delights at all, yet He will bestow a certain peace and conformity, which will satisfy you more than pleasures and favours do others, since, as you have heard and read, His Majesty often bestows such favours on the weakest, though I think they would not change these pleasures for the greater strength of those who encounter aridities. We are greater lovers of pleasure than of the cross. Do Thou, O Lord! who understandest the truth of things, try us, that so we may know ourselves.

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CHAPTER II.

THE SAINT CONTINUES THE SAME DISCOURSE, AND SPEAKS OF ARIDITIES IN PRAYER, ETC.

I HAVE known some souls, and I may with great truth say *many*, who have arrived at this state, and lived many years in this uprightness and composure of soul and body, as far as can be done; and yet, after this, when they now seemed almost lords of the world (at least, greatly undeceived respecting it), when His Majesty began to try them in some small matter, they acted with so much restlessness, disquiet, and narrow-heartedness, that they made me astonished, and also exceedingly fearful for them. It is no use to give them advice, because having so long addicted themselves to virtue, and practised it, they fancy they can instruct others, and that they have abundant reason to feel such things.* In a word, I have met with no remedy, nor do I find any to console such persons, unless it be to show great compassion for their affliction (and it is, indeed, a pity to see them subject to such misery), and not to contradict their fancies, for they agree in their imagination that it is for God's sake they endure these things, and thus they never consider it to be an imperfection in them, which is another delusion that happens to persons so far advanced. That they should feel such things is no wonder, though, in my opinion, this feeling should quickly pass away; for our Lord, in order to make His elect sensible of their misery, often withdraws His favours for a time; we need nothing else in order to know ourselves immediately. This way in which our Lord tries these souls is soon discovered, for they very clearly understand their defects. Sometimes, when they see themselves inclined to earthly things (and these no

* "En sentir aquellas cosas."

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very great matters), without their being able to help themselves, this afflicts them more than the other. But this I consider a great mercy of God; for though it be a fault, still it is very useful towards acquiring humility. This, however, is *not* the case with the persons I speak of; for they (as I said) admire * these things in their thoughts, and wish others to admire them likewise.

I will mention, a few particulars, in order that we may prove and understand ourselves better before our Lord prove us; it is better to be prepared, and to know ourselves beforehand.

A rich person having no children, nor any one to whom he can leave his estate, happens to lose some of it, yet not so much but that the remainder is sufficient for himself and household, and he has even something to spare. Now if such a person should be as much disturbed and uneasy as if he had not bread to eat, what use would it be for our Lord to require such a person, to forsake all things for the love of Him? It may be said, that the person is troubled at his loss, because he could have left his money to the poor. But I am confident God prefers that I should conform myself to what His Majesty does, and endeavour to keep my soul quiet, rather than exercise this charity. But as he does not do this, because our Lord has not advanced him so far, let it pass; let him understand, however, that he is wanting in this liberty of spirit; but by means of it, he might dispose himself in such a way, that our Lord would be induced to give him this liberty, because he begs it of Him.

Another has abundance to live on and something to spare. An opportunity presents itself for obtaining more wealth. If it be offered in the way of a gift, let him take it; but *seek* after it, and when this is obtained, to strive for more and more; let

* Literally, "Canonizan en sus pensamientos estas cosas."

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the intention be ever so good (and it must be, for, as I said, these persons are given to prayer, and are really virtuous); yet let these individuals be assured they will never enter the mansions next to the King's.

It is just the same with these persons if they chance to be despised, or their honour to be lessened, however slightly; for though God gives them the grace to bear this trial well very often (since He is very desirous of favouring virtue in public, so that the particular virtue which they fancy they have may not suffer; or it may be because these persons have done Him some service, for our Lord is exceedingly good); yet there remains in their mind a certain uneasiness, which they cannot easily overcome or get rid of.

O my God! are not these the persons who for so long a time have meditated on the sufferings of Thy Son, and have considered how great a favour it is to suffer, and who even *desire* sufferings? They wish every one to be as regular in their manner of life as they themselves are; and God grant they may not imagine the anxiety they suffer to be only for the faults of others, for in their thoughts they imagine this to be meritorious also. You may think, sisters, that I wander from the subject, and that what I say does not relate to *you*, because here (in this house) there are no such things, since we neither have, nor desire, nor seek after wealth, nor does any one do us the least injury; these comparisons, then (you may say), have nothing at all to do with us. Still many other things which may happen may be learnt from them, which to mention here is neither necessary nor convenient. By these comparisons you will discover whether you are wholly disengaged from all affection to that which you have abandoned; for certain little matters present themselves (though not of this kind) by which you may make a sufficient trial of yourselves, and know

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whether you have the command of your passions. And, believe me, the matter consists not in wearing or not wearing a religious habit, but in endeavouring to practise virtue, and in subjecting our own will in everything to that of God. It also consists in regulating our lives—conformably to whatever His Majesty shall order and appoint, and in desiring *not* our own will but His.

But as we have not yet arrived at this point, let us (as I said) acquire humility, sisters, for this is the ointment of our souls; and if we possess this virtue, the physician, who is God, will come and heal us, though he may delay a little.

The penances which such persons perform are as regulated as their life; these they carefully observe, in order thereby to serve our Lord, for all this is not bad. In the performance of these penances, they use great discretion, in order that they may not injure their health; never fear their killing themselves, for their good sense will take care of that. Such a love is not desired as deprives us of reason; but I wish we had such reason as not to be content with serving God in this manner, always in the same way, so that we never arrive at the end of our journey. And as, in our opinion, we are always going on, and thus we tire ourselves—(for, believe me, this is a very tiresome way); it will be very good, if we do not lose ourselves. But, my daughters, if we had to go from one country into another, where we might conveniently arrive in eight days, how would you like it if, on account of the inns, the winds, the snows, the rains and bad roads, we were *a year* on our journey? Would it not be better to finish the journey at once, for we shall meet with all these inconveniences, and there is danger from the serpents also.

Oh! how many clear proofs could I give of this. God grant I may have escaped these, for I often think I have not. While we proceed with so much

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caution, everything offends us, because we are afraid of everything; and so we have no courage to venture forward, as if we could arrive at these mansions, and leave *others* to endure the difficulties of the way. But as this is impossible, let us, sisters, for the love of God, urge ourselves on, and leave our reasons and our fears in His hands; let us forget this natural weakness, which may occupy us exceedingly; let our superiors, whom it concerns, take care of this, and let us think of nothing but hastening on to see this Lord; for though you have but few delicacies, yet too much care for your health may deceive us,—how much more when our health will be no better on this account! This I know; and I know, likewise, that the matter does not consist in that which relates to the body, this being the least considerable. The journey I speak of is our advancing with great humility, and herein (if you understand me) I consider lies the loss of all losses to those who do not go forward. We should, therefore, imagine that we ourselves have travelled but a little way; and so we should really believe, but that our sisters have made haste, and have advanced far; and we ought not only to desire but endeavour to be the most base and wicked of all creatures. If we do this, we shall prove that we are in a most excellent state; otherwise we shall continue all our lives where we are, with a thousand afflictions and miseries; for, not having left ourselves, our journey becomes very difficult and painful, because we travel weighed down with this clay of our misery. But this does not happen to those who go forward, and ascend to the remaining mansions.

In these mansions, of which I am now speaking, our Lord does not fail to reward us, both as a just and merciful God, for He gives us much more than we deserve, and bestows upon us pleasures far greater than those delights which we receive in this present life. But I do not think that He gives many in-

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ternal delights, unless He may sometimes do so, in order to invite us to behold what passes in the other mansions, that so we may prepare ourselves to enter them.

You may, perhaps, imagine that joys and pleasures* are one and the same thing; and you may ask, why I make a difference in their names? To me the difference seems to be very great, though I may be mistaken. But I will explain my meaning in the Fourth Mansions, which come next; and as I shall then have something to say respecting the pleasures our Lord gives, it will be there the proper place to speak on the subject; and though this may seem unprofitable, yet it may in some way prove useful, in order that understanding what each is, you may strive for what is the best. This is a great comfort for souls whom God leads thus far, but a subject of extreme confusion for such as already imagine they have obtained everything. If they be humble, they will be excited to give God thanks; but if they want this virtue, they will feel an interior dejection, though without any cause, for perfection does not consist in having sweetnesses, but in this; in loving most (and so the reward will be in proportion), and in striving who will labour the best in justice and in truth.

You will, perhaps, ask me, "If this be true (as it most certainly is), of what use is it to speak of those inward favours, and to discover how they are to be known?" I know not; ask him who commands me to write on the subject, for I should not dispute with my superiors (since this would not be fit), but simply obey them.

What I can with truth assert is, that when as yet I neither had, nor by experience knew, nor once thought of ever having any such thing in all my life (this I thought with reason, since it would have been

* "Que contentos y gustos todo es uno," &c.

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too great a joy for me to have discovered, or even conjectured, that in anything I pleased God); yet when I read in books respecting the favours and consolations which our Lord bestows on souls that serve Him, I was extremely taken with them, and thereby my soul was excited to give great praises to God. If my soul then being so bad did this, how much more will good and humble souls praise Him! And though only one should praise Him, and that but *once*, in my opinion it would be proper to mention such praise, in order that we might know what joys and delights we lose by our own fault; and rather so much the more, because if they come from God, they are attended with love and courage—helps which enable us to travel without pain, and to go on increasing in good works and virtue.

Do not imagine it is of little importance whether we work or no, for provided that we do everything which lies in our power, our Lord who is just will give us in some other way what He deprives us of in this, for reasons best known to himself, since his secrets are very hidden; at least, that which is the best for us will no doubt be given to us.

That which, in my opinion, would be exceedingly useful to those who, through the mercy of God, have arrived at this state (to whom, as I have said, no small favour is shown, that they are so near ascending higher), is being very careful to comply promptly with obedience; and it would be very useful for persons, even though they might not be religious, to choose (as many do) some one whom they might consult, in order to avoid doing their own will in anything, for this is what generally deceives and hurts us. And here we should not seek a person of the same disposition and ideas as ourselves, who might flatter us, instead of striving to detach us from the things of this world; but we should procure one who knows well the deceits of the world, because, by conversing with one who already knows them, we

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shall then be better enabled to discover these deceits *ourselves;* and also because some things, which at first appear impossible, yet when we see that others easily perform them and sanctify them, encourage us exceedingly; by their flying, we venture to fly, just as young birds do, which though they cannot at first take a high flight, yet do it by little in imitation of the old ones. This helps us very much; I know it.

However much these persons may be resolved not to offend God, yet it is the best not to expose themselves to the occasions of offending Him; because, as they are (still) near the First Mansions, they might easily return to them again (for their courage does not rest on a solid foundation, like theirs who are exercised in afflictions, for these understand the tempests of the world, and know how little they are to be feared, and that its pleasures are not to be desired), and perhaps some violent persecution would force them back, for the devil knows how to raise such storms in order to do us harm. But these persons, intending through a laudable zeal to prevent the sins of others, prove unable to resist that which may happen to themselves upon such occasions.

Let us mind our own faults, and not trouble ourselves about those of other people. It is very common for persons who are so regular themselves, to wonder at everything; and yet we might perhaps learn, in something of great importance, from the very person at whom we wonder.

And if we should surpass them in our exterior comportment and manner of conversation, this is of no great consequence (though it may be good); but we should not, therefore, immediately desire that *all* persons should walk in the same way, just as one should not teach the workings of the spirit, who perhaps does not know what they are; for in this desire, my sisters, which God gives us of doing good to our souls, we may commit many errors. Hence, the best course is, to follow the

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directions of our rule,—that is, always to endeavour to live in silence and in hope, since our Lord will take care of the souls (He loves). And if we do not neglect to pray to His Majesty, we shall by His assistance advance greatly.

May He be blessed for ever.

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THE FOURTH MANSIONS.

CHAPTER I.

THE SAINT SPEAKS OF THE DIFFERENCE WHICH EXISTS BETWEEN SWEETNESS AND TENDERNESS IN PRAYER.—SHE ALSO MENTIONS THE CONSOLATION SHE FOUND ON DISCOVERING THAT THE IMAGINATION AND THE UNDERSTANDING WERE DISTINCT POWERS.

As I am now about to speak of the "Fourth Mansions," it is necessary, as I said, that I should recommend myself to the Holy Spirit, beseeching Him to speak for me henceforth, that so I may say something of those mansions yet remaining, so as you should understand me. Here begin supernatural subjects; and it is very difficult to make them understood, unless His Majesty assist us, as I have said elsewhere, when writing (about fourteen years ago) what I had then learnt and experienced, though it seems to me I now have a little clearer knowledge of those favours, which our Lord bestows on some souls. But merely feeling them is quite different from knowing how to express them. May His Majesty teach me how to express myself, if any profit is to be derived therefrom; if none, then I do not wish it.

As these mansions are nearer the chamber where the King is, great is their beauty; and there are things there so glorious to be seen and understood, that the understanding is incapable of finding any means whereby to explain these subjects properly, without being very obscure to those who have no experience therein: but he who has this experience, especially if it be great, will understand what is said.

In order to arrive at these mansions, it may seem necessary to have lived a long time in the former ones; but though, generally speaking, one must have

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dwelt in the *last* we were speaking about, yet there is no certain rule, as you have often heard; for our Lord bestows His favours *when*, and *how*, and to *whom* He pleases, being His goods, without any injury to any one. Venomous reptiles seldom enter these mansions; and if they should, they do no harm, but rather we gain thereby. I consider it the best for us when they *do* enter and make war (against us) in this state of prayer, because the devil may mingle his delusions with those delights which God gives us, if there were no temptations; and so he might do much more harm than when there are temptations; and the soul might not gain so much, when those things were removed which acquire her merit, and she is left in her ordinary inebriation. When the soul always remains in one state, I do not consider it safe; nor does it seem to me possible that the Spirit of God should, during this exile, continue always in the same state.

Now, to come to what I was discoursing of, viz. the difference between the pleasures and delights which we receive in prayer, methinks that those may properly be called "pleasures,"* which we ourselves acquire in our meditations and petitions to our Lord; and these come from our good works, though assisted of course by God (for this must always be pre-supposed, since without Him we can do nothing); they proceed, as I said, more from the particular good actions we perform, and which it seems we have gained by our labour; and justly does it please us to be employed in such things. But if we consider the matter well, we shall find the same "pleasures" in many other things which may happen to us in the world. Thus, for example, from a great estate coming unexpectedly to us; from seeing one whom we did not expect to see, and whom we love tenderly; from having brought to a success-

* "Los contentos se pueden llamar," &c.

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ful end a business of importance; from having succeeded well in a matter of which all speak well; from beholding arrived safe home either a husband, a son, or a brother, who we heard was dead.

I have seen tears attended with great delight, and sometimes this has happened to myself. Methinks that as these are natural joys, so are those which divine things excite in us, except that the latter are of a more noble origin, though even those others are not bad; in a word, they begin from our nature, and end in God. Delights * begin from God, and nature feels them, and delights as much, nay, more, in them as in the examples I have mentioned. O Jesus! how I long to be able to explain myself herein; because I think I find a clear difference, and yet I am unable to make myself understood: may our Lord assist me. I now remember some words we use at prime in the last Psalm, which runs thus at the end of the verse: "Cum dilatasti cor meum." Whoever has much experience will hereby see the difference between the one and the other; but he who has not this experience will require more explanation. The pleasures of which I have spoken do not enlarge the heart; rather do they *straiten* it, though they may be pleasures which arise from considering that we do something for God; and certain tears of sorrow follow, which seem caused in some degree by passion. I know little of these passions of the soul, and of that which comes from sensuality, and from our nature; if I did, I might perhaps be able to express myself better. But I am so dull, that though I have had experience therein, I do not understand it, or know how I could explain my meaning as I could wish. Knowledge and learning are very necessary for everything.

What I have known by experience concerning this state (I mean the tenderness and delights received in

* "Los gustos comienzan de Dios."

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meditation) is this, that if I began to weep over the passion of our Lord, I could not finish without having a violent headache; it was the same when I wept for my sins. Our Lord thus bestowed a great favour upon me. I am not now desirous of examining which is best, this or that, but I wish I could explain the difference between one and the other. Tears sometimes flow for these things, and desires arise aided by our nature and constitution; but, as I have said, they at last end in God; and, even so, we ought to esteem it a high favour if there be humility; and remember that they who receive these favours are not therefore the better because we cannot tell whether they are all the effects of love; but when they are, it is the gift of God.

The souls of the preceding mansions have, for the most part, these devotions, for they are almost always occupied by the operation of the understanding in discourse and meditation; and they do well, because more is not given to them. Still it would be good sometimes to employ themselves in making acts of love and praise to God, to rejoice in His goodness and other perfections, and to desire His honour and glory (and doing all this in the best manner we can, for these acts powerfully excite the will). Let them take care, however, when our Lord bestows such affections upon them, not to forsake them in order to finish their usual meditation. But having spoken at some length in another part on this subject, I shall say no more here. This point, however, I wish you to notice, viz., in order to make great advance in this way, and to be able to ascend to the mansions we desire, we must remember that the business does not consist in thinking, but *in loving much;* do therefore whatever may excite you most to love. Perhaps we do not know what love is; and I do not wonder at it, for it consists not in having greater delights, but greater resolutions and desires of pleasing God in everything, and in endeavouring, as much

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as possible, not to offend Him, and in beseeching Him that He would promote the honour and glory of His Son, and extend the bounds of the Catholic Church. These are signs of love. Do not imagine that it consists in not thinking on anything else, and that all is lost if you have a few distractions.

With this confusion of thought, I myself have sometimes been greatly afflicted. It is not much more than four years ago since I came to know, by experience, that the thought or imagination (that you may understand me better) is *not* the understanding. I asked a learned man, and he told me this was true, and this answer gave me no small satisfaction. As the understanding is one of the faculties of the soul, I was troubled because it was sometimes so restless; and generally the imagination flies so rapidly, that only God can tie it up, and when he ties it we then seem to be in a manner disengaged from the body. I have seen, I think, the powers of the soul employed on God, and recollected in Him, and yet, on the other hand, the imagination so unquiet, that I was astonished.

O, my Lord! accept as some small satisfaction, the great trouble which we endure in this journey through want of knowledge. The misery is, that as we suppose we have no more to learn but to think upon Thee, we neither care to ask those who are learned, nor do we imagine there is anything to be asked. Hereby we suffer terrible afflictions, because we do not understand ourselves, and we consider *that* to be a great crime which is not bad, but good. Hence arise the afflictions of many who are given to prayer, and their complaints of inward troubles (at least this happens to persons who are not learned); hence also arise melancholies, and loss of health, and a total neglect of prayer, through not considering that there is an interior world. And as we cannot prevent the heavenly bodies from going on in their rapid course, so neither can we stop the wanderings

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of the imagination. But we immediately send all the faculties of the soul after it, and consider ourselves quite lost, and that we have mis-spent the time during which we were in God's presence; and perhaps in the mean time the soul is wholly united with Him in the inmost mansions, while the imagination is roaming round the suburbs of the castle, and is engaged with a thousand wild and poisonous beasts, and thus acquiring merit by this painful conflict. We should not therefore trouble ourselves, nor give up our prayer, for it is the devil's object to induce us to do this. The greater part of all our troubles and miseries arise from our not understanding ourselves.

While I am writing these words, and considering the great noise which, as I said in the beginning, runs in my head, so that I consider it almost impossible to finish what I am commanded to write, methinks there are within it many vast rivers, and on the other side of these waters, that several little birds hang chirping: this noise is not in my ears, but in the top of my head, where they say the superior part of the soul resides.

I have been in this state for some time; and it seems to be a wonderful movement of the spirit, mounting upwards with speed. God grant I may remember in the following Mansions to explain the reason of this: it is not proper to do it here.

It is very probable that our Lord was pleased to send me this pain in the head and infirmity, that so I might understand it the better; for notwithstanding all the noise I endure, it does not hinder my prayer, nor my attention to what I am saying: for my soul remains very tranquil in her quiet, and love, and desires, and clearness of knowledge.*

Now if the superior part of the soul reside in the top of the head, how is it that it is not troubled by

* "El alma está muy entera en su quietud," &c. I cannot find a word to express the meaning of "*entera.*"

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the noise? This I know not; but I *do* know that what I say is true. When the prayer is without suspension, then indeed the noise troubles her; but while this continues, no harm is perceived; it would, however, be a considerable evil if through this obstacle I were wholly to omit prayer.

It is not therefore good to trouble ourselves on account of distracting imaginations, nor indeed to heed them at all; for if they are caused by the devil, by our acting thus he will desist. But if they come (as they do) from the misery entailed on us by Adam's side, together with many other evils which come from the same source; let us, however, bear them patiently for the love of God.

We are likewise, without our being able to help it, subject to eating and sleeping, which is a great affliction. Let us acknowledge our misery, and desire to be there, where no one can despise us, for I remember having sometimes heard what the Spouse in the Canticles has said to this effect.* Indeed, I find nothing in this life, concerning which words can be said with more truth; since all the contempts and crosses which can happen to us in this world seem not, in my opinion, to be in any way compared with these inward conflicts.

Any (exterior) trouble or war may be endured, provided we can find peace where we live, as I have said before. But that we should find rest from a thousand troubles which are in the world, and that our Lord should be pleased to prepare such a rest for us, and afterwards that we should find these difficulties, is indeed a very painful and almost insupportable cross.

Bring us, therefore, O Lord! to that place, where these miseries cannot delude or attack the soul, as they sometimes seem to do, though even in this life our Lord delivers her from these, when she has ar-

* "Jam me nemo despiciat." (Cant. viii. 1.)

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rived at the last mansion, as I shall explain if God wills me to do. But perhaps these miseries will not afflict and torment all persons, as they have done me during many years. I was so wicked, that it seemed I desired to be thus revenged on myself; and because this proved so painful to me, I think that it may perhaps prove so to *you* likewise. Therefore it is that I mention it on every occasion, in order to try whether I could once make you understand it (as it is so necessary), in order that it may not always trouble and afflict you. But let these thoughts, which may be compared to a mill-clock, pass by, and let us grind our corn, not omitting to work with our will and understanding.

This trouble is more or less, according to our health and the times. The poor soul may suffer, though without any fault herein; since we do other things, for which it is but proper we should practise patience. And because that which we read and are advised to do is not sufficient (viz. to induce us to pay no attention to these thoughts),—*us*, especially, who know but little, I think that is not all lost time which is spent in some further explanation of it, and in comforting you in this particular. But little good can be done till our Lord is pleased to give us light. It is necessary, however, and it is His Majesty's pleasure also, that we should use the means which may help us. Let us endeavour to understand ourselves, and not blame the soul for that which is only caused by a weak imagination, by nature, and the devil.

CHAPTER II.

THE SAME DISCOURSE IS CONTINUED, AND BY A COMPARISON SHE EXPLAINS WHAT IS MEANT BY TENDERNESS IN PRAYER.

O MY Lord! how much have I digressed! I have already forgotten the subject I was speaking

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about; for business and sickness have compelled me to put off my writing till I had more leisure; and then having a bad memory also, I do everything without any order, because I cannot review what I have written. And who knows, that perhaps whatever I say is without method and confused? At least it seems so to me.

I think I have said concerning spiritual consolations, that they are sometimes mixed with our passions, and they carry with them certain fits of sobbing. I have even heard tell of some persons, whose heads have been affected thereby, and certain external motions have likewise followed, which they could not stop; and this with such violence as to make the blood gush out of their nostrils, with other painful things. Of these I can say nothing, because I have had no experience therein; but they afford us comfort, because (as I have said) all ends at last in a desire of pleasing God and of enjoying Him. But those which I call Divine delights* (and which I have named elsewhere the Prayer of Quiet) are of another nature, as those amongst you who through the mercy of God have experienced them will understand.

In order to understand the subject better, let us imagine we see two springs, together with two cisterns that are filled with water; for I find no comparison more adapted for explaining spiritual subjects than this of water; and this I account for, because I have little knowledge, and my ability is but of little service; and because I am a great lover of this element, which I have considered more deeply than other matters, for many and deep secrets must necessarily be found in all those things which have been created by so great and wise a God; and hence we may gain much benefit (from considering them), just as they do who understand them, though I

* "Los que yo llamo 'gustos de Dios.'"

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believe that the very smallest creature which God has made, even the smallest ant, contains in it much more than we generally imagine. Now these two cisterns are supplied with water in different ways; the one from a distance by several pipes, and with great skill; and the other is filled by the very rising of the water, without any noise at all. If the source be abundant, as that is of which we are speaking, it sends forth a great stream, after it has filled the cistern; here pipes laid by art are needless, since the water never fails, but runs continually. You see here the difference; for the water which comes through pipes resembles, in my opinion, the tenderness and pleasure spoken of before, which we draw from our meditation; for these we draw from our thoughts, by the help of creatures in the meditation, and by tiring the understanding. In a word, as they are obtained by our diligence, they make a noise when we are filled with the benefits which (as I said) they cause in the soul. To the other cistern the water comes from its proper source, which is God; and thus, when His Majesty wills, and is pleased to bestow some supernatural favour, He produces it with excessive and most abundant peace, quiet, and delight in our interior, without our discovering whence or how it comes. Neither are this joy and delight felt in the heart, as the joys of the world are; I mean, they are not felt *at first*, for afterwards every part is filled, and the water goes through all the mansions and powers, till it reaches even to the body; and therefore I said that it begins in God and ends in ourselves, because the whole exterior man (as those will find who have experienced this) enjoys this pleasure and sweetness.

While I am now writing these words, I am thinking of the above-mentioned verse: "Thou hast dilated my heart"—*Dilatasti cor meum.* He says, He has "dilated the heart;" it does not seem to me,

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as I said, that it is a thing which takes its rise from the heart, but from some other more interior part, as a profound deep. I think it must be the centre of the soul, as I afterwards understood, and as I shall explain more in detail; for I discover, indeed, such (wonderful) secrets within us, as often to astonish me: but how many more are!

O my Lord and my God! how wonderful is Thy greatness! Yet here we live, like so many silly swains, imagining we have attained some knowledge of Thee; and yet it is indeed as *nothing;* for even in ourselves there are great secrets, which we do not understand. I say "as nothing," when compared with the treasures found in Thee, though even from Thy works we discover very sublime greatnesses respecting Thee.

Returning, then, to this verse: I think that which will suit my purpose best is this dilatation. When this heavenly water begins to rise, from the source I spoke of, in the inmost recess of the soul, our whole interior seems to be enlarging and dilating, and producing certain delights which cannot be expressed. Neither can the soul understand what this is which is here given to her. A certain fragrance is diffused, as if (I may say so) some odoriferous perfumes were cast into a brasier, without any light being seen, or the place whence the odour comes. But the heat and delicious scent pass through the soul; and very frequently (as I have said) the body shares in this delight. See that you properly understand me; for neither is any heat felt, nor smell perceived, since it is something more subtile than these. I speak thus to make you understand me.

Let those persons who have not experienced these things know that this is the truth; that it is understood, and that the soul understands it more clearly than I now mention it. This is not a thing that can be imagined, since with all our diligence we cannot

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acquire it. Hence it is manifest that it is not of our own coin, but of the purest gold of Divine wisdom. Here the powers, in my opinion, are not united, but absorbed and astonished, as it were, (with the wonders they behold).

It is possible, that in treating of these interior subjects, I may in some way contradict what I have said elsewhere; and no wonder, for it is about fifteen years since I wrote the book;* and perhaps our Lord has now given me clearer insight into these things than He did then. Both now and then I may have made mistakes in everything; but I cannot tell an untruth, for by the Divine grace I would rather suffer a thousand deaths. I speak on what I understand. The will clearly seems to me to be united in some way with that of God; but these truths of prayer are best known afterwards by their effects, for there is no better crucible to try them by. Our Lord bestows a very great favour, if he who receives these gifts should understand them; it is an extraordinary favour if he should not return back.

You, my daughters, wish immediately to be possessed of this prayer; and with reason, since the soul without, as I have said, is never able to understand the favours which our Lord bestows upon her here, and with what affection He attracts her nearer and nearer to Himself. It is certain that she desires to know *how* this favour is obtained. I will tell you what I have learned regarding it. Let us submit when our Lord is pleased to bestow it, since His Majesty wills it so, and not otherwise: our Lord knows why; let us not trouble ourselves concerning this.

After we have done what those in the preceding mansions do, let us practise humility. Humility is that virtue by which our Lord suffers Himself to be

* The saint alludes to her "Life," which she commenced at Avila in 1561. The "Mansions" were written about the year 1576.

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overcome, and to grant us whatever we desire of Him. The first mark by which you may discover whether you possess this virtue is, to think yourselves unworthy of these favours and delights from our Lord; nay, that you do not deserve to have them at all during your life.

You may ask me, how are these to be obtained, if we are not to seek after them? I answer, there is no better means than that which I have mentioned; and we should not seek them for the following reasons. First, because the chief thing which is necessary for this object is to love God without interest. Secondly, because it shows a little want of humility, that we should imagine we can obtain such a great favour by our miserable services. Thirdly, because the true and most proper preparation for this object, is a desire for suffering and imitating our Lord, and not for having delights, since we have offended him so much. Fourthly, because His Majesty is not bound to give them to us, as He is to give us (eternal) glory, if we observe His commandments; for we may be saved without these delights; and He knows better than we do what is the fittest for us, and for those who truly love Him. What I say is indeed true. I know some who proceed, as they ought, by the way of love, in order solely to serve Jesus Christ crucified; who not only do not ask Him for delights, nor desire them, but they beg of Him not to bestow them in this life: this is the truth. Fifthly, because we should only labour in vain; for as this water does not pass through pipes, like the former, unless the spring supplies it, all our labour will be of little use. I may say, that with all our meditation, and all our struggles and tears, this water will not come; for it is bestowed only on him to whom God shall please to give it, and often when the soul thinks the least about it.

We are His sisters; let Him do with us as He pleases, and lead us whatever way He wills. I

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firmly believe, that whoever will truly humble and annihilate themselves (I say "truly," because we must not act according to our fancy, which often deceives us; but I mean, we should be wholly disengaged from everything), our Lord will not fail to bestow this, and many other favours upon them, which we know not how to desire. May He be praised and blessed for ever. Amen.

CHAPTER III.

THE SAINT EXPLAINS WHAT IS MEANT BY THE PRAYER OF RECOLLECTION, AND SHE DESCRIBES ITS EFFECTS.

THE effects of this prayer are many, some of which I will now mention. And first, there is another kind of prayer, which commences almost always before this, whereof I will say but little, having spoken of it elsewhere.

It is the Prayer of Recollection, which also seems to me to be supernatural; for it does not require being in the dark, nor to shut the eyes, nor does it consist in any exterior thing. It often happens that, without our wishing it, our eyes close, and we desire solitude; and, without any contrivance, a building seems to be erected for the prayer mentioned above: for the senses and external things seem to lose their hold, so that the soul may recover hers—which was lost. They say the soul enters within herself, and sometimes that she ascends above herself. By these expressions I shall not be able to explain anything; for I have this unhappiness in thinking you will understand me best according to the way I can express myself: perhaps no one except myself will understand.

Let us imagine that the senses and faculties, which I called the guards of the castle—(and this is the comparison I made use of, whereby to explain my

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meaning), have gone out, and associated with strangers, who wish evil to this castle for some days and years. Afterwards, perceiving themselves lost, and sensible of their ruin, they endeavour to return, and approach the castle, though not resolved to enter it (for habit is a hard master); yet they are no longer traitors, for they remain around the environs.

The Great King, who is within the castle, perceiving their good inclination, in His mercy is willing to pardon them; and like a good shepherd (acts towards his sheep), He makes them know His voice by so sweet a whistle, that they themselves can scarcely hear it. This He does that they may not wander and be lost, but return to their mansion. This whistle of the Shepherd has such power, that they immediately abandon all those external things which deceived them, and hasten into the castle.

Methinks I never explained myself in the way I have now; for in order to seek God in our interior, where He is found with more profit than in creatures (St. Augustine tells us he found Him there, after having sought him in several places), it is a great help if God should bestow this favour upon us. Think not that this is acquired by means of the understanding, labouring to consider God within itself. This is good, and an excellent method of meditation, for it is founded on this truth, viz. that God is within us. But this is not what I mean; because every one may do this by the assistance of our Lord. What I speak of is of a different nature; for sometimes these persons, before they begin to think of God, have already got into the castle; by what way I know not, nor how they heard the whistle of their Shepherd: it was not by means of their ears, since nothing is heard, but a sweet recollection in the interior is clearly perceived, as those who go along this way will find. I know not how to express my meaning better.

I think I have heard this compared to a tortoise

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retiring within itself; whoever made use of this comparison, no doubt understood it well, but these creatures enter into themselves whenever they please; here, however, it is not the case, for the recollection of which I am speaking is only in our power when God is pleased to bestow this favour upon us. I think that whenever His Majesty bestows it, He gives it to such only as are already disengaged from the things of this world (I do not say that they are actually so, for perhaps their state will not allow it, but they are so in their affections and desires), since He so especially invites them to attend to interior things. Hence I believe, that were we to give ourselves up entirely to His Majesty, He would bestow not only this, but many other gifts on those whom He begins to call to higher things. Let him praise God greatly, whoever shall experience this in himself, for it is very proper he should understand the favour and give thanks for it, that so he may dispose himself for others which are greater. The disposition which will prepare us for this, is to listen attentively to whatever our Lord shall speak to us interiorly, as some books advise and direct us—not to seek after discourse, but to attend to whatever God shall work in the soul, though unless His Majesty begin to give us raptures, I cannot understand how the thought can be restrained, but that this is likely to do us more harm than good, though this is a question frequently discussed among some spiritual persons. For my part, I confess my want of humility; for they have never given me sufficient reason to incline me to their opinion.

One person mentioned to me a certain book of the holy friar, Peter of Alcantara, and he is one to whom I am sure I should submit, for I know he understood this. On reading the book, we found he said the same as I did, though not in the same words; but we may collect from what he said, that our love is still to be kept awake.

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It is possible I may still deceive myself, but I rely upon these reasons:—Firstly. That in this work of the spirit, he who thinks and desires to do less, does more. All we have to do is to ask, like some poor persons before some great and rich emperor, and immediately let us cast down our eyes and wait with humility. And when by His secret ways it seems that He hears us, then it is good to be silent, since He permits us to stand near him; and it will not be amiss to forbear working with the understanding (I say, if we can). But if we perceive this King has not heard us, nor that He pays any regard to us, we must stand like dolts, for the soul only remains so when she herself procures this; then she remains much colder, and perhaps the imagination becomes more restless, by the violence which is offered to it in our thinking on nothing. Our Lord wishes we should ask Him, and that we should remember we are in *His* presence, who knows well what is best for for us. I cannot persuade myself that human industry is of any avail in such things as His Majesty has placed bounds to, and has wished to reserve to himself. This He has not done in many other things that are in our power, provided He assist us, such as in penance, prayer, and other good works, as far as our misery is able to go.

The second reason is, because these internal works are all sweet and peaceable; whereas to do things *painful* (I mean by "painful," any violence done to ourselves, such as holding our breath), rather hurts than helps us; but the soul must leave herself entirely in the hands of God, to do with her whatever He pleases, without her taking any care about her own interest, at least, as little as possible, and totally resigning herself to the will of God.

Thirdly. Because the same care which is employed for thinking on nothing, will, perhaps, excite the imagination to think much.

Fourthly. Because the most pleasing and sub-

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stantial service we can do for God is, to have only His honour and glory in view, and to forget ourselves, our own benefit, delight, and pleasure. But how does *he* forget himself, who uses so much care that he dare not stir nor breathe, nor lets his understanding and desires move him, to wish God's greater glory, nor does he rejoice at what He already possesses?

When His Majesty wishes the understanding to leave off discoursing, He employs it in another way, and gives it a light and knowledge so far above what we can arrive at, that He makes it to remain absorbed; and then, without our knowing *how*, it is much better instructed than it would be with all our diligence, which may rather do it more harm, and mislead it. For as God has given us faculties that we may work with (and everything has its reward), we need not charm them,* but let them do their office, till God shall advance them to something better.

That which I think the most proper for a soul to do, which God has been pleased to raise to this mansion, is what I have already said. We should likewise endeavour, without violence or noise, to keep the understanding from discoursing, but not suspend it, nor the imagination either; yet it is good to remember that it is in presence of God, and who this God is. If what it feels is the cause of suspending it, well and good; but let it not try to understand what this is; for as it is bestowed on the will, let her enjoy it without (using) any industry; let her do nothing, except only to utter certain amorous expressions; for though we strive here not to be without thinking on nothing, yet often we are so, though it may be only for a very short time.†

* "No hay para que las encantan, sino dexarlas hazer su officio," &c.

† I need hardly remark, that this language can be understood only by those who have had *experience*.

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But, as I have mentioned elsewhere, the reason why, in this kind of prayer, the understanding ceases to discourse, is this (I speak of that wherewith I began this mansion, to which I have likewise added that of recollection, of which I was to speak first, and which is much inferior to that which I have called the prayer of "Divine Delight;" but it is the commencement towards arriving at it; for in that of recollection, neither meditation, nor the operation of the understanding, should be omitted), the reason is, because in this kind of prayer, the delights rise immediately from the source, without being conveyed in pipes; or the understanding spends itself in considering, that it does not understand what it desires; hence, it goes up and down like one mad, and rests upon nothing. The will is so fixed upon her God, that the restlessness of the understanding greatly afflicts her, therefore she must not heed it, for it makes her lose much of that which she enjoys; let it alone, and let her throw herself into the arms of love, for His Majesty will teach her what she is to do on that occasion; this consists almost entirely in considering herself unworthy of so great a favour, and employing herself in giving thanks.

Through speaking of the prayer of recollection, I have been prevented from mentioning the effects on signs found in souls, to whom our Lord gives this prayer. There is clearly perceived an enlargement or dilatation* in the soul, just the same as if water that flows from a spring into a cistern should have no passage out of it; but the cistern was made in such a way, that the more the water comes in, the greater and wider does the vessel become to contain the water. And so it seems to be in this prayer, whereby God works many other wonders in the soul, and thus disposes her further still for containing all. This sweetness and interior enlargement are mani-

* "Un dilatamiento ò ensanchamiento en el alma."

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fested by what remains in her afterwards; for she is not so restrained, as formerly she was, in matters relating to the service of God, but she enjoys much more liberty; neither is she distressed through the fear of hell; for though she feels greater fear now for having offended God, yet she is free from *servile* fear, and has a great confidence that she shall enjoy Him. The fear she used to have of losing her health by doing penance has now ceased, and she thinks she can do all in God, as she has greater desires of using austerities than ever. The fear of afflictions, likewise, which she used to have, is now more moderate, because she has a more lively faith, for she knows that if she bears them for God's sake, His Majesty will give her grace to bear them with patience; nay, sometimes she desires them, since she has a great desire to do something for God. And as she now understands His greatness better, she accordingly esteems herself more vile; having, likewise, tried the delights of God, she finds those of the world but dung (in comparison); she separates herself from them by little and little, and for doing this she has more command over herself. In a word, she has improved in all virtues, and will not fail to go on increasing, unless she should relapse and offend God again, for then all is lost, however highly raised a soul may have been in virtue and contemplation.

We must not suppose that when God bestows this favour once or twice, the above-mentioned effects will always remain in her, unless she continue to receive the like favours, for herein all our good consists. There is one point to which I earnestly wish to draw the attention of him who finds himself in this state; it is this,—to be extremely careful not to expose himself to the occasions of offending God; for the soul in this state has not strength enough, but is like an infant beginning to suck, for should it leave the mother's breast, what can be expected but death? I have great fears lest the like should happen

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to *him* on whom God shall bestow this favour, if he should leave off prayer, unless it be on some very particular occasion, or provided he return to it quickly, for otherwise he will go on from bad to worse. I know there is great reason to fear in this case, and I know some whom I pity much, for I have seen this happen to them of which I am speaking, when they forsook Him who so ardently desired to become their friend, and to prove Himself such by His actions. I thus warn them beforehand to avoid the occasions, because the devil labours much more against one such soul than against many others on whom our Lord does not bestow such favours, because they may do him much more harm by drawing others after them who may do great service to the Church of God. And were there nothing else but to see how His Majesty shows a particular affection for them, this would be enough to induce him to do his utmost for their destruction, and thus they are furiously attacked by him; and if once conquered, they are more deeply ruined than others.

You, my sisters, are free (as far as can be seen) from these dangers. May God preserve you from pride and vain-glory, and permit not the devil to counterfeit these favours, which may be known by not having these effects, but all are quite the contrary. I wish to warn you of one danger, though I have alluded to it in another place; it is one into which I have observed persons fall who are given to prayer, and women especially, who, being weaker, have more need of the caution I wish to give here. It is this:— that some persons being weakened with severe penances, prayers, or watchings, or having naturally a weak constitution, swoon away on receiving some of these consolations, and their nature fails them; and when they perceive some internal delight, with a certain external decay and languishing; or when a spiritual sleep, as it is called, happens, which is somewhat more than the above-mentioned,

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they mistake the one for the other, and allow themselves to be absorbed; and, in the mean time, the more they yield, the more are they absorbed, because their nature becomes weaker, and in their idea it seems to be a rapture; but I call it a *stupidity*, for it is nothing else but losing our time, and destroying our health.

A certain person continued eight hours together in this way without sense, or without any perception of divine things; but, by being made to sleep and eat, and indiscreet penances being forbidden her, she was cured of this distemper; for there was one who knew the person well, though she had deceived her confessor, and several others, and herself too, yet without any intention of deceiving. I believe that the devil used some diligence to draw some profit thence, and he began to gain a great deal thereby.

We must notice that when this truly comes from God, though there may be an interior and exterior languishing, yet it is *not* in the soul, which feels strong emotions on seeing herself so near to God; besides, this continues only for a very short time. It returns, however, again, and is absorbed; and if (as I said) there be not weakness in this prayer, the suspension is not so great as to enfeeble the body, or to cause any external alteration in it. Be sure, then, when you find yourselves thus affected, to acquaint the superioress, and take as much recreation as possible, and let her not give you so many hours of prayer, but very few; she should also make you sleep and eat enough, till your usual strength shall return, in case you should have lost it thereby. But if any one's constitution be so weak that this is not sufficient for her, believe me that God wishes her to be only in the active life, for there must be monasteries for all kinds of persons. Let them employ her in business, and be always careful that she never be left alone; for if she be, she will completely ruin her health. This will be a very great mortifi-

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cation to her; here our Lord will try her love for Him, by observing how she bears His absence. After some time, He may perhaps be pleased to restore her strength; but if not, she will gain by vocal prayer and by obedience what she would have obtained this way, and perhaps she may gain more. Some may likewise be found of such a weak mind and imagination (I have known some such), that they think they see all they fancy; this is very dangerous.

But as I may hereafter say something more on this subject, I will say no more here, as I have dwelt so much on this mansion, into which I think more souls enter, and where the devil may do more harm (because the natural and supernatural are often found united); for in the following mansions, our Lord does not give him such power. May He be praised for ever.

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THE FIFTH MANSIONS.

CHAPTER I.

THE SAINT BEGINS TO EXPLAIN HOW THE SOUL UNITES HERSELF WITH GOD IN PRAYER, ETC.

O MY sisters, how shall I be able to explain to you the riches, treasures, and delights which are contained in these Fifth Mansions? I think it better to say nothing respecting those delights which I have not yet mentioned, since it is impossible to be able to express them; neither can the understanding comprehend them, nor are comparisons of any use in explaining them, since earthly things are too mean for this purpose. O my Lord! send light from heaven, that I may be able to enlighten these Thy servants, since Thou art pleased that some of them should enjoy these delights; enlighten some of them, that they may not be deceived by the devil, who transforms himself into an angel of light, for their whole desire is to please Thee.

Though I said "some of them," yet many of them enter these mansions, of which I am now about to speak. Some more and some less, and therefore I say that the greater part enter them; but I believe that *few* attain some of those delights, which I shall mention here, and which are to be found in this mansion. But if they should reach only the gate, *that* is a great favour which our Lord shows them; for although many are called, yet *few* are chosen. And so I say now, that although we all wear this sacred habit of Carmel, and are all called to prayer and contemplation—(because this was our rule in the beginning, which those holy fathers of Mount Carmel drew up, who purchased this treasure and this

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precious jewel which we now speak of by such great solitude and contempt of this world); yet few of us dispose ourselves that so our Lord may discover this jewel to us. For though as regards our exterior we go on well at present, yet in order to obtain what is necessary in the way of virtue, we must not be negligent in anything, for we stand in need of great virtue.

Let us then, my sisters, earnestly beseech our Lord, that since we may in some degree enjoy heaven upon earth, He would grant us His grace, and show us the way, lest through our own fault we miss it; and that He would give strength to our soul, to enable us to dig till we find this hidden treasure, which is certainly within us. This I should wish to explain, if our Lord be pleased to enable me. I said "strength to the soul," in order that you may know that, as regards bodily strength, there is no obstacle to one on whom our Lord does not bestow it. No one is prevented from purchasing his wealth: if one give what he has, God is content. Blessed be so great a Being.

But consider, daughters, that in order to obtain this object of which we are speaking, He does not wish you to keep anything back, less or more; He will have all for Himself, and in proportion to what you know you have given, He bestows greater or less favours upon you. There is no better proof than this, for discovering whether we have arrived at the prayer of Union or not. Think not that here is a dream, like the former. I say a "dream," because there the soul seems to be as it were asleep, though she seems neither fast asleep nor yet quite awake. Here, however, she is thoroughly awake to God, though fast asleep as to worldly things and to ourselves; for in truth, during the short time that this lasts, she is almost senseless and unable to think on anything, even if she wished. No art is necessary to suspend the imagination; indeed, if she loves,

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she does not understand *how* she loves, nor what it is she loves, nor what she wishes to have. In a word, she is like one entirely dead to the world, in order to live the more in God; and this is a pleasant death; a death, because it is a loosening * of the soul from all the operations which it can exercise while in the body; it is a pleasant death, because though she be truly in the body, yet she seems to be separated from it, in order to abide the better in God: this is in such a manner, that I know not whether she have even life enough to breathe. I was thinking on it, and it seems to me there was not enough; at least, if she do breathe, she does not perceive it. All her understanding would wish to be employed in knowing something of what she feels; but as strength is not sufficient for this, she remains so astonished that if she be not quite absorbed, she neither stirs hand or foot, as we say of one who swoons away in such a manner that we think he is dead.

O wonderful secrets of God! I should never be satisfied with endeavouring to make them understood, if I thought I should succeed; and thus I will say a thousand foolish things, provided I may happen but once to speak to the point, that so we may praise our Lord exceedingly. I said it was not a dream; for in the preceding mansions, until her experience is great, she remains doubtful of that which happens to her,—whether she had desires; whether she was asleep; whether it came from God, or whether the devil transformed himself into an angel of light: in a word, she has a thousand suspicions; and it is well she has them, since (as I have said) our nature itself may deceive us here sometimes; for though venomous animals have not such easy access, yet little lizards † may get in, and being small they insinuate themselves everywhere; and

* "Es un arrancamiento del alma," &c.

† The saint means "little fancies and imperfections," as she explains a few lines below.

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although they do no harm, especially if (as I said) they be despised. These are little fancies which come from the imagination, and from what has been mentioned above; yet they are often very troublesome. But these lizards, however small, cannot enter, because here there is no imagination, nor memory, nor understanding, that can hinder this good.

I dare venture to assert, that if the union truly come from God, the devil cannot enter or do any harm, because our Lord is joined and united with the essence of the soul, so that he (the devil) dare not approach; nor can he understand this secret, for it is clear he does not know our thoughts, much less can he understand so profound a secret. This applies to the acts of the understanding and the will, for the devil clearly sees the thoughts of the imagination, unless our Lord blind him at that moment. O blessed state! in which this cursed one cannot hurt us. Thus the soul becomes a very great gainer, because God works in her, without any one, even herself, being able to hinder Him. And what then will He not give, who is so willing and desirous of giving, and who can do whatever He wills?

Methinks I may have thrown you into some confusion by saying, "If the union be from God," as if there were *other* unions. And so there are, though they be about vain things, such as when we love them much; and then the devil transports such lovers out of themselves, but not in the way that God does, nor with the same delight, satisfaction, peace and joy of the soul. It is a joy surpassing all the joys of the world, all its delights, all its pleasures; and yet, further, we need only observe whence these joys come, and whence those of the world, for they produce very different feelings, as you will find by experience.

I have said somewhere, that the one resembles the touching of the skin or surface of the body; but the

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other pierces the very marrow. I spoke rightly, and I know not how to express myself better. It seems to me you are not yet satisfied, because you imagine you may be deceived, as it is a difficult matter to examine the interior. Although, therefore, what has been said may be sufficient for one who has experienced the like (the difference being so great); yet I wish to give you a clear proof by which you may be *certain* whether it comes from God, for His Majesty has this day brought the proof to my mind, and it seems a sure one.

In difficult matters—though I think I understand them, and speak the truth — I always use these words: "It seems to me;" for if I should be mistaken, I may be the more willing and ready to believe what learned men tell me; and though they themselves have not experienced these matters, yet they have great weight, because they are great scholars. As God considers them so many lights in His Church, He discovers the truth of things to them in order that they may admit them; and if they be not immoral persons, but servants of God, they are never astonished at His greatness, because they know that His power is able to do still greater wonders.

In a word, though some things be not declared, they will certainly find others written, whereby they may see that these also can be done. In this respect I have great experience; and likewise I have known certain half-learned, timorous, and jealous persons who have cost me very dear; at least, I think that whoever believes not that God can do much more, and that He *has been* pleased, and is *still* pleased sometimes to reveal Himself to His creatures, such a person keeps the gate closely shut against receiving any favours himself.

Never let this happen to you, my sisters, but believe that God can do much more; and do not trouble yourselves whether they on whom He be-

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stows these favours be good or bad, for this (as I have said) His Majesty knows; we must not meddle with this, but with humility and simplicity of heart let us serve His Majesty, and praise Him for His works and wonders.

To return now to the proof which I said was certain. You see that God makes this soul quite stupid, in order to imprint the deeper in her true wisdom; hence she neither sees, nor heeds, nor understands, nor perceives all the time she is in this state, and this time is short; and, indeed, it seems to her shorter than it is. God so fixes Himself in the interior of this soul, that when she comes to herself she cannot but believe she was in God, and that God was in her. This truth is so deeply rooted in her, that though many years may pass away before God bestows the like favour upon her, she never forgets it,—not to dwell on the effects left in her, of which I shall speak afterwards, because it is a point of great importance.

But you will ask me how the soul saw it or understood it? I answer, she did not see it then, but afterwards she sees it clearly; and this is not so much a vision as a certitude which remains in the soul, and which God only can infuse into her. I was acquainted with a certain person, who did not know that God was in all things by His presence, power, and essence; but by a favour of this kind received from God, she came to believe it so firmly, that though one of those half-learned men of whom I have spoken, and whom she asked how God was in us (and he knew as little of this truth as she did, before God made her understand it), answered that he was there only by His grace; yet the truth was so imprinted in her, that she did not believe him. She afterwards asked others, and they, telling her the truth, comforted her exceedingly!

But you must not be led into a mistake by imagining that this certainty remains in a corporal

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form, just like the certainty whereby we believe the body of our Lord Jesus Christ to be in the most holy Sacrament, though we do not see it; He is not in this way here, but only by His divinity. But how can *that* have a certainty which we see not? I do not know; it is His work: but I know that what I say is *true;* and whoever has not this certainty, I should say it was not a union of the soul with God, but of some faculty, or some other of the many kinds of favour which God bestows upon the soul. In all these things we must not seek to know the reasons for seeing how they are done, since our understanding cannot comprehend them; why, then, should we desire to labour in vain, and to trouble ourselves about it? It is enough to know that He who is all-powerful has done it.

With regard to what I was saying, that here we can do nothing, I remember what I have heard the spouse say in the Canticles: "He brought me into the cellar of wine." She says not; she went there. She says, likewise, that she went seeking her Beloved here and there. This union I consider as the "cellar" where our Lord places us, when and how He pleases; but we can never enter by our own diligence: His Majesty must bring us in, and enter Himself into the centre of our soul, without passing in through any gate, just as He came among His disciples, when He said to them, "Peace be to you," and when He rose from the sepulchre without lifting the stone. In order to show His wonders the more, He does not wish us to contribute anything, but to subject our will entirely to His; neither does He expect that the gate of the powers and senses (which are all asleep) should be opened for Him. You will see, afterwards, how His Majesty is pleased to allow the soul to enjoy Him more in her very centre, than she does here in this last mansion.

O my daughters! what great things shall we see, if we wish to look upon nothing else but our own

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baseness and misery, and if we consider how unworthy we are to be servants of so great a Lord, whose wonders exceed all comprehension. May He be eternally praised! Amen.

CHAPTER II.

SHE CONTINUES THE SAME DISCOURSE, AND ILLUSTRATES THE PRAYER OF UNION BY A COMPARISON.

You may imagine that I have already mentioned what is to be seen in this mansion; and yet much more remains to be said, for, as I have mentioned, there is more or less [yet remaining]. As regards union, I think I can add nothing more. But when a soul on whom God bestows these favours disposes herself, there are many things to be said about that which God works in her. Some of these I will mention, and also say something respecting the state the soul is in. To make the subject better understood, I shall make use of a comparison proper for the purpose, in order that we may see how, though in this work which our Lord himself does *we* can do nothing, yet by our disposing ourselves we may contribute much to induce His Majesty to bestow this favour upon us.

You have already heard of His wonders in the making of silk (for only He could be the author of such an invention), and how from a seed no bigger than little pepper-corns, this seed, when the mulberry-trees first send out leaves, begins to quicken with the heat, while it was, as it were, dead, till this nourishment, whereon it lives, appeared. Thus, certain little worms feed on mulberry-leaves, till afterwards they become bigger, and then on the boughs they go spinning silk with their little mouths, and making little cells very close, in which they are enclosed. From this cell or bag, which contains

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a large, but ugly worm that dies, there afterwards rises a white and very beautiful butterfly. Who could believe this, if we had not seen it, and it was related to us as being the case in other times or countries! or by what reason can we comprehend, that a creature so void of reason as a silkworm or a bee, should be so diligent and so industrious in toiling for our benefit? The poor little worm loses its life in this work.

This may serve you, sisters, as a meditation for some time, without my saying any more to you, for by means of it you may have some idea of the wonders and wisdom of our God. What then should we do, did we understand the properties of all things? It is of great advantage to us to be occupied in meditating on these wonders, and in rejoicing that we are the spouses of so wise and powerful a King.

But let us return to what I was saying (and apply the comparison I have mentioned to ourselves*). This worm† *then* begins to have life, when by warmth from the Holy Spirit, it begins to make use of that general assistance which our Lord gives to every one, and to take advantage of the remedies which God has left in His Church, both by frequenting the sacraments and reading good books, and hearing sermons; for these are [powerful] remedies for a soul, that is dead by its negligence and sins, and is plunged into the occasions of sin. Then this worm begins to live, and hereby it supports itself with good meditations, until it has grown up. This will serve my purpose, for the rest is of little consequence.

Now when this worm has grown up (as I said at first), it begins to make silk, and to build its house in which it is to die. This house I wish you to understand here is Christ; as St. Paul says, "Our life is hid with Christ in God," and that Christ is our

* These words I have ventured to add.
† That is, we ourselves.

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life. You see here then, daughters, what we can do by God's assistance, since His Majesty himself becomes our habitation, as He is in this prayer of union, and we ourselves erect the habitation. I seem to say, we are able to take from or to add to God, because I say, He is a habitation, and that we may erect it for our own abode. But the truth is, we can neither subtract from nor add to God, but we can take from and add *to ourselves*, as these little worms do; for no sooner have we done all we can herein, than God will unite our insignificant labours, which are nothing, with His greatness; and He will give them so high a value, that our Lord himself will be the rewarder of our works. And as He Himself has been put to the greatest expense, so He will unite our trifling sufferings with those immense ones which His Majesty endured, and He will make them all one.

Oh! then, my daughters, let us quickly perform this work and weave this cell, casting aside all self-love and our own will, and let us not adhere to any earthly thing; let us perform works of penance, prayer, mortification, obedience, and all the rest as you value. God grant we may act according to our knowledge, and the instructions we have received concerning our duty. Let this worm die—let it die (as it does, when it has performed that for which it was created)—and you will then perceive how we see God; and we behold ourselves immersed in His greatness, just as the worm is in its cell. *Notice* how I say, "We shall see God," as I have mentioned above, that is, as He discovers Himself to us in this kind of union.

Now let us consider what becomes of this worm (since for this purpose I have said all this). As soon as in this prayer it becomes sufficiently dead to the world, it comes forth a white butterfly. O, wonderful greatness of God! How changed does the soul come forth, by having been only for a short time (never, in my opinion, a full half-hour) immersed

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in the greatness of God, and united closely to Him! I tell you the truth; she now does not know herself, for you must remember, that there is the same difference here as there is between an ugly worm and a beautiful butterfly. The soul knows not how she could merit so great a favour, or whence it could come. She is so desirous of praising God, that she would be willing to annihilate herself and endure a thousand deaths for His sake. She immediately begins to wish to endure great afflictions, and she cannot do otherwise; her desires of penance, solitude, and of all men knowing God, are excessive, and on this account she feels great pain in seeing Him offended. But in the next mansion, I shall mention these things more in particular, for the matter in this and the following mansion are almost the same, though the power of the effects is very different, because (as I have said) if a soul, after God has advanced her to this state, should force herself to go forward, she will see great things. O, how strange is it to behold afterwards the restlessness of this butterfly, though in all its life it was never more at ease nor more calm. This is an occasion of praising our Lord, that it knows not where to rest nor to settle; and having before enjoyed such repose, it is disgusted with all that it sees on earth, especially when God often allows it to drink of this wine, it gains more and more almost every time. Now it no more esteems the works which it used to do when a worm, viz., forming its cell by little and little. Its wings have now grown; how then, as it is able to fly, can it take pleasure in creeping along? All it can do for God, seems little in proportion to its desires. It does not wonder much at what the saints did and suffered, because it now understands by experience, how our Lord assists and transforms a soul in such a way, that she does not seem the same, nor to be of the same shape; because the weakness which she seemed to have before in doing

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penance, she perceives is now no more, but has become strong. The ties which bound her to her friends, relations, or estate (which, when she was desirous of leaving, neither acts nor resolutions were sufficient to remove), are now entirely broken in such a manner, that she is displeased to be obliged to do what is barely necessary in this respect, lest she might seem to be resisting the will of God.

Everything tires her, because she has found that creatures cannot give her true repose. I seem to say much, but yet I could say more. Whoever has received this favour from God, will clearly perceive that I say little. No wonder, then, that this butterfly seeks out some new repose, because it finds itself a new creature as regards the things of this world. Where then will the poor little creature go now? Return whence it came? It cannot, for it is not in our power, until God be pleased again to bestow this favour upon us. O Lord! what fresh troubles begin for this soul! And who could imagine this, after such sublime favours have been received? In a word, either one way or the other must we bear the cross as long as we live. Should any one say, that having arrived there,* he always enjoys rest and delight, I would answer, "he never reached so far;" but that, if ever he entered the former mansion, it was, perhaps, some delight caused by natural weakness, and perhaps by the devil, who sometimes gives us a certain peace, in order to raise afterwards a more terrible war. I do not say that they who arrive at this mansion have *no* peace, for their very afflictions are of such value and so deeply rooted, that from them come peace and content.

From this same disgust which earthly things cause, such a painful desire arises of leaving this world, that if anything can allay it, it is the consideration that it is God's wish they should live in this land of

* At the Mansion.

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exile; but this is not sufficient, for notwithstanding all these favours and benefits, the soul is not so resigned to the will of God as it is afterwards; still, it does not fail to be resigned, though it is with great pain, for she is unable to act otherwise, as no more is given to her; and every time she prays, her grief is accompanied with many tears. This pain seems, perhaps, to arise, in some degree, from being exceedingly troubled on beholding God offended, and so little esteemed in this world, and at the destruction of so many souls — heretics as well as infidels. But *Christians* excite her compassion the most. And though she sees the mercy of God is great, and that however wickedly they live, they may repent and be saved, yet she is afraid that many are *lost*.

O greatness of God! but a few years since, and perhaps only a few days, this soul remembered no one but herself; and who has [now] placed her in such tormenting cares, which so many years of meditation cannot make her so sensible of, as she is now sensible of them?

But, O! my Lord, if I should endeavour, during many days and years, to exercise myself in thinking on the great evil there is in God being offended,— how those who are lost are his children, and my brethren,—on the dangers in the midst of which we live,—and how well it would be for us if we were out of this miserable life, would not all these considerations cause this pain within me? No, daughters, no! this is not the pain which is felt here, for by the assistance of our Lord we may, by often thinking on these things, conceive a deep sorrow; but it does not penetrate, nor reach the inmost part of the soul, like this I have been speaking about here, which seems to grind a soul to powder, without her procuring such a state, or even sometimes without her wishing it.

What is this? Whence comes it? I will tell you. Do you not remember what I said regarding the spouse, though on another subject, that God

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took her into the wine-cellar, and "set in order charity in her?"* The same happens here; for this soul having entirely resigned herself into His hands, the greatness of His love has so captivated her, that she neither knows nor desires anything except that God would dispose of Her as He pleases. As far as I understand, God will never confer this favour on any soul except upon such as he chooses for his own; He is pleased, without her knowing how, that she should depart hence, signed with His seal; for here the soul does indeed no more than the wax when a seal is imprinted on it, for the wax cannot seal itself, but is only disposed, — that is, it is soft; nor does it soften itself for this object; it lies still, and allows the impression to be made.

O goodness of God! all is at Thy cost. Thou requirest only our will, and that there should be no resistance in the wax. You see, then, sisters, what our God does here for us, that this soul may already know she is His; He gives her what she has, viz., the very same that His Son had in this life; which is indeed an exceedingly great favour. Who ever desired more to leave this life than He did? So spoke He at the supper: "With desire have I desired." But, my Lord, did not that sorrowful death which Thou wert to suffer so painfully, present itself before Thine eyes? "No; for the immense love and desire I had to some souls exceeded without comparison those torments; and the many which I have already endured, and which I still endure, are sufficient to make me consider these as nothing."

Often have I thought of this, and knowing what great torments a certain soul (known to me) has endured, and still endures, by seeing how God is offended—and that soul would rather die than endure it—I considered that if a soul having such little love, which, when compared with that of Christ, might be

* Canticles (chap. xi. ver. 4).

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said to be almost none, felt such intolerable pain, what, then, must Christ our Lord have suffered, and what a life must He have led, having all His sufferings present before Him, and always beholding the dreadful crimes which would be committed against His Father? I firmly believe that these were far greater than those which He endured in His most sacred passion, for then He saw the end of those sorrows; and the joy of seeing our redemption purchased by His death, and of testifying the love He had for His Father in suffering so much for Him, no doubt lessened His pains; just as it happens to men in this world who, through the force of love, perform great penances which they scarcely feel; nay, they would prefer to do still more, for all seems but little to them. What, then, did His Majesty feel when He saw so good an opportunity offered of manifesting to His Father His perfect obedience to Him, and love for His neighbour? O what a great delight is it to suffer in doing the will of God?* But to behold so many offences continually committed against His Majesty, and so many souls condemned to hell, is, in my opinion, so dreadful, that I believe (had He not been more than man) one day of such torment would have been enough to have put an end to many lives; how much more, then, to one?

CHAPTER III.

THE SAINT CONTINUES THE SAME DISCOURSE, AND SPEAKS LIKEWISE OF ANOTHER KIND OF UNION.

LET us now return to our little dove,† and consider some things which God bestows in this state.

* "O gran deleite, padecer en hazer la voluntad de Dios. Mas en ver tan contino tantas offensas hechas à su Magestad, &c. tengo por cosa tan rezia, que creo si no fuera mas de hombre, una dia de aquella pena," &c.

† "Tornemus à nuestra palomica;" that is, the soul.

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We should always remember, that she must endeavour to advance in the service of our Lord, and in the knowledge of herself; for if she receive no more than this grace, and become careless in her life, as if already secure, and turn out of the road which leads to heaven (viz., the "Commandments"), she will become like the worm which comes from a seed, in order that other worms may be produced, but it remains dead itself for ever. I have said, "it comes from a seed," because I am confident that God will not allow so great a favour to be bestowed in vain, since if the receiver should not be a gainer thereby, it may at least profit others. As he still possesses these virtues and desires mentioned before, as long as he perseveres in them he will always do good to other souls by warming them with his heat: and if he should lose it, still he continues in the desire that other souls may be benefited, and he delights to make known the graces and favours which God bestows on those who love and serve Him.

I know a person who was exactly in this disposition; though she was almost lost,* yet she delighted in being the means of others receiving profit by the favours God had bestowed upon her; she also taught the method of prayer to those who were not acquainted with it, and she did great good. Our Lord, in His mercy, afterwards gave her light; for, in truth, she had not, as yet, experienced the effects mentioned above. But how many are there whom God calls to the apostleship, as He called Judas, and to whom He communicates Himself? How many does He call to a crown, like he called Saul, and who nevertheless afterwards perish through their own fault?

Hence, sisters, let us draw the conclusion, that in order to gain more merit, and not to be lost like

* "Muy perdida," &c. One who has abandoned prayer for a time. This seems to be the meaning of the expression.

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they were, we can have no other security than "obedience," and a resolution not to transgress the law of God. I speak to those on whom He bestows such favours, and likewise to *all* persons.

It seems to me that, after all I have said, this Mansion yet appears somewhat obscure; but since so much is to be gained by entering into it, it is good for those on whom God does not bestow supernatural favours not to consider themselves without hope, since by our Lord's assistance a true union may easily be obtained, if we endeavour to procure it, by having our will united only with God's will. O! how many of us can say this,—that we desire nothing else, and would die for this truth, as I think I have already said? I now tell you, that when this is the case, we have obtained this favour of our Lord. Be not anxious about that other sweet union which I spoke about before, since whatever is most valuable in that comes from this of which I am now speaking. O, what a desirable union is this! Happy the soul which has obtained it! she will live with comfort in this life, and none of the evils of this life will trouble her, unless it be from some fear of losing God, or of seeing Him offended. Neither sickness, nor poverty, nor the death of any one can disturb her, except it be the death of one which God's Church might miss. Such a soul sees clearly that our Lord knows better what to do, than she knows what she desires.

You must remember that there are pains directly produced by nature and by charity, which move us to compassionate our neighbours, just as our Lord felt when he raised Lazarus. Our being united with God's will does not remove these sorrows, though they do not disturb the soul with a restless, distressing passion. They quickly pass away; for, as I mentioned when speaking of the delights in prayer, they do not reach the *interior part* of the soul, but only the senses and faculties. They are felt in the

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former mansions, but not in these latter of which I am now speaking.

In order, then, to attain this kind of union, what has been said about suspending the faculties is not necessary here; for our Lord is able to enrich souls in many ways, and conduct them to these mansions, and not by the short road,* of which I have already spoken. But carefully notice, daughters, that it is necessary the worm should die; and this is the more to your cost, for in the union mentioned above, the seeing of yourselves in a life so new conduces much in helping you to die; but here, while living in this world, it is necessary we should kill the worm *ourselves*. I acknowledge this will cost us much more labour; but it has its reward: hence, if you gain the victory, your recompense will be the greater. There is no doubt respecting its being possible, if there be a real union with the will of God. This is the union which I have desired all my life; this it is which I continually beg of our Lord, for it is the most clear and secure. But, alas! how few of us arrive at it, though he who is careful not to offend God, and has entered into religion, imagines he has done everything! O! how many worms remain undiscovered, until, like that which consumed the plant of Jonas, they have devoured our virtues by self-love, self-esteem, rashly judging our neighbours, though in small things, by want of charity towards them; for although we satisfy the obligation (being forced thereto) of not committing sin, yet we are far from doing what is required of us, in order to be *wholly* united with the will of God.

What do you think, daughters, is His will? That we endeavour to be entirely perfect, so as to become one with Him and the Father, as His Majesty prayed. Observe what is wanting to us, in order to arrive at perfection. I tell you I am now writing with great

* "No por el atajo," &c.

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grief, because I see I am so much behind, and all through my own fault; for this object it is not necessary our Lord should caress us with new consolations, because it is sufficient that He has given us His Son to teach us the way. Think not, that if my father or brother should die, the matter consists in conforming myself to God's will in such a way as *not* to feel their death; or if sickness and troubles come, that I must bear them cheerfully. This disposition is good, and sometimes it arises from a certain discretion, because as we cannot remedy the matter, we make a virtue of necessity. How many such like things did the philosophers (of old), by means of their great wisdom. Here there are only two duties which our Lord requires of us, viz. the love of God, and the love of our neighbour; these are the objects we must labour for; by observing these laws perfectly, we do His will, and consequently we shall be united with Him. But, as I have said, how far are we from observing these two duties as we ought to do towards so great a God! May His Majesty grant us grace, in order that we may deserve to arrive at this state; and this is in our power if we wish.

In my opinion, the *surest* sign for discovering whether we observe these two duties, is the love of our neighbour; since we cannot know whether we love God, though we may have strong proofs of it; but they can be more easily discovered respecting the love of our neighbour. And be assured, that the further you advance in that love, the more will you advance in the love of God likewise; for the affection which His Majesty has for us is so great, that as a return for the love we show our neighbour, He will make that love go on *increasing* which we have for Himself: of this I have no doubt.*

* Every reader will see at once how *practical* the saint is here; what lessons of wisdom may be learnt from almost every page, even of the most sublime chapters of this book!

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It is very important for us diligently to observe how we proceed in this matter; for if we endeavour perfectly to acquire this love of our neighbour, we shall have done everything; because, as our nature is corrupt and evil, unless it come from the root (which is the love of God), we shall never perfectly possess the love of our neighbour.

Since then, sisters, this love is so necessary for us, let us endeavour to know ourselves in small things, and not take much notice of some very great distractions, which come crowding upon us in the time of prayer, such as what we should wish to do for our neighbours, and even for the salvation of one soul; and if actions do not follow conformable to these desires, we have no reason to think we shall perform them. I say the same respecting humility, and all other virtues. Great are the wiles of the devil; for he will turn hell upside down a thousand times, in order to make us imagine we possess a virtue which in reality we do not. And with reason (does the devil act in this way); for thus he effects much mischief, because these counterfeit virtues are always attended with some vain-glory, coming from such a source. But, on the other hand, those virtues which God gives are free both from pride and vain-glory.

I am pleased to see certain souls who, when in prayer, seem willing to be despised and publicly insulted for God's sake, yet afterwards they would hide a small defect, if they could; or if they have not offended, but yet are accused of something, God deliver us from the clamour they raise. But whoever cannot endure this, let him be careful not to pay any regard to what he has, in his own opinion, determined to do; for it was not in reality any real act of the will (because when it is so it is quite another thing), but it must have been some imagination, whereby the devil makes his attacks, and lays his snares, especially for women and unlearned persons, because we cannot understand the difference

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between the faculties and the imagination, and a thousand other interior things. O! sisters, how clearly can it be discovered which amongst you has really this love of your neighbour, and which of you has it not in such perfection! If you understood the importance of this virtue, you would not trouble yourself about anything else.

When I see souls so very careful about being attentive at their prayers, and about understanding them also, so that it seems they dare not so much as stir or divert their thoughts, lest they should lose the little pleasure and devotion they feel in their prayer, I then clearly discover how little they understand the way by which they may arrive at union, because they suppose all the business consists in this. No! sisters, no! our Lord desires *works*.* If then you see a sister sick, whom you can in any way relieve, never fear you will lose your devotion if you sympathise with her; if she be in pain, grieve with her, and if necessary, fast, that so she may have something to eat; not so much for *her* sake as because our Lord wishes it. This is true union with His will.

If you should hear some person praised much, rejoice more at this than if you were praised yourselves; and this indeed is easy, because where there is humility, praise is a torment. But to rejoice when the virtues of the sisters are known, is a great matter; and likewise when you discover any defect in them, to feel it as if your own, and to discover it.

But on this point I have spoken at length elsewhere, because I see that if we fail herein we are undone. Our Lord grant this may never happen to you; for if you be not wanting in this, I assure you you will certainly obtain from His Majesty the union mentioned above. But when you find yourselves wanting herein, though you may have devotion and delights, and may fancy you have already attained

* "Obras quiere el Señor."

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to some little suspension* in the Prayer of Quiet (for some will immediately imagine everything is done); believe me, you have *not* arrived at union, and beseech our Lord to give you this perfect love of your neighbour: let His Majesty alone, for He can bestow upon you much more than you can desire, if you force your will to comply with that of the sisters in everything, even though you should lose some of your rights; and if also you should forget your own interest and pleasure, in order to accommodate and please them, however much nature may be opposed to it; and when an opportunity presents itself, if you relieve your neighbour of some trouble, and take it on yourself. Think not this will not cost you anything; consider how dearly the love our Spouse had for us cost *Him;* for in order to free us from death, He himself suffered the most painful death of the cross.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SAINT CONTINUES THE SAME SUBJECT, AND ENTERS INTO SOME FURTHER EXPLANATIONS OF PRAYER, ETC.

You seem to me to be desirous of knowing what has become of this little dove, and where she rests, since I told you that she does not rest in spiritual delights, nor in worldly pleasures, but flies higher. But I cannot satisfy your desires till I come to the last Mansion. God grant I may remember (what I have to say), and have leisure to write it; for it is now five months since I began this book, and as the pains in my head will not allow me to review what I have written, things will probably be repeated twice over. But this is of little consequence, as what I say is intended for my sisters.

* "Llegado ya à alguna suspensioncilla."

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I am particularly anxious to declare my opinion respecting this Prayer of Union; and, according to my poor understanding, I will make use of a comparison, and shall afterwards speak more at length of this butterfly, which never lies still, although it continually fructifies and benefits both itself and other souls, because it finds no true rest in itself.

Now you have often heard how God is spiritually espoused to souls: blessed be His mercy, who vouchsafes to humble Himself so low. Though this may seem a gross comparison, yet I can find none more proper to express my meaning than the sacrament of matrimony, though the subject must be treated in a different manner; for being altogether spiritual, it differs much from the other, which is only corporeal, because here everything is love united with love; and its operations are exceedingly pure, and so sweet and so delicate that they cannot be described: but our Lord knows how to make us *feel* them.

It seems that this union has not yet arrived at a spiritual espousals; but, as in this world, when two persons are thinking of marrying, the first consideration is, whether they are suitable, and whether they like each other, and see one another; so here also, if consent has already been given, and the soul be fully informed what advantage she will gain thereby, and if she be resolved to do the will of her Spouse in everything, then His Majesty is willing to take her, well knowing if the soul be so resolved. He also shows her this favour, of allowing her to be better acquainted with Him, and that they may (as the saying is) come to have an interview with each other; and thus He unites her with Himself.

We may say that just so is it here, for all is over in a very short time. Here there is no giving or taking; it is only necessary that the soul be made to see, in a secret manner, who is this Spouse whom she is to take, for she cannot by any method understand in a thousand years, by means of her senses and

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faculties, what she is able to learn here in a very short time. But as He is so loving a Spouse, He leaves her by giving her this one sight of Him, more worthy of being afterwards united with Him, because the soul becomes so enamoured with Him, that she does everything on her part not to break off this divine espousals. But if this soul should grow negligent, and set her affection on something else besides Him, then she will lose everything; and her loss will be as great as are the favours which our Lord continues to bestow upon her, and greater far than words can express.

Hence, then, Christian souls (I speak to those whom our Lord has conducted so far), I beseech you, for His sake, do not become careless, but avoid all occasions (of sin); for when the soul is in this state, she is not so strong as to be able to expose herself to them so much as she will be afterwards, when the marriage is concluded: this is the next mansion. There was no further intercourse than seeing each other; and then the devil becomes extremely busy in attacking her, and trying to prevent these nuptials, for afterwards, when he sees that she has already wholly given herself up to her Spouse, he dares not become so bold, because he is afraid, having learnt by experience that if he should attack her at any time, he frequently suffers great loss, and she gains a great deal.

I tell you, daughters, I have known persons very far advanced, and who have arrived at this state; but these the devil afterwards recovered by his wonderful subtilty and stratagems; for this purpose hell combines together, because (as I have said) the devil loses *not one* but many souls. He has now acquired great experience in this particular; for if we consider the multitude of souls which by means of only one individual God attracts to Himself, we shall find matter to praise and thank him exceedingly. How many thousands did the martyrs convert? How many

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has one virgin, as St. Ursula, conducted to heaven? Again, how many souls has the devil lost by means of St. Dominic, St. Francis, and other founders of religious orders? All these, as we read in their lives, received the like favours from God. And what was this but that they endeavoured not to lose by their own fault so divine an espousals? O! my daughters, our Lord is as ready *now* as He was then to bestow favours upon us, and even *more*—if I may say so—as if He required our being willing to accept them, because He finds so few in these days who have such regard for His honour as they had then. We are too great lovers of ourselves, and we make use of too much human prudence, to part with a little of our rights. O, how dreadful a delusion is this! May our Lord grant us light not to fall into such darkness, through His great mercy.

You may ask here or call in question two things. First, if the soul be so intimately united with the will of God (as I have already mentioned), how can she be deceived, since she never desires to do her own will in anything? Secondly, by what ways can the devil enter your soul with such danger as to ruin it, since you have separated yourselves from the world, frequent the sacraments, and — if I may be allowed the expression—keep company with angels? Through the goodness of our Lord, all of you have no other object but that of serving Him in everything; it is no great wonder for those who are immersed in worldly things to be exposed to dangers. I acknowledge you have great reason for what you say, for God has been very merciful to us. But when I consider how Judas was among the apostles, living continually with God Himself, and listening to His words, I see there is no security whatever.

To the first question I answer, that if this soul were always united to the will of God, it is clear she could never perish. But the devil comes with deep

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artifices, and, under the appearance of good, unhinges her by making her notice some small things relating to herself, and turning her attention to certain other matters which he makes her believe are not bad; and thus by little and little he begins to darken the understanding, and cool the will, and breed self-love in her, till by one thing or another he withdraws her from God's will, and unites her to his own.

From this truth an answer may be given to the second question, for no enclosure is so strict into which the devil cannot enter, — no desert is so remote whither he cannot travel. Another thing I will mention,—and perhaps our Lord permits it, in order to see how this soul will conduct herself, which He intends making use of to enlighten others.*

The diligence which seems to me to be the most secure, after having continually begged of our Lord in prayer to help us with His hand, and having frequently considered that if He should leave us we shall soon fall into an abyss (which is the truth), and never putting any trust in ourselves (which would be madness), — the diligence, I repeat, which seems to be the most secure, is being very cautious and careful to observe how we advance in virtues,— whether we grow better or worse, especially in loving one another, and desiring to be esteemed the lowest even in ordinary things; for, if we consider well, and beg light from our Lord, we shall immediately discover our gain or our loss. You must not imagine that a soul which God has thus brought so far will be so soon forsaken by Him, and that the devil will not find work enough to do. No! His Majesty so deeply feels lest she should be lost, that in many ways He gives her a thousand internal warnings, in order that the evil may not be hidden from her.

* These words which follow I cannot understand:—"Que mas vale que en los principios si ha de ser ruin lo sea, que no quando dañè à muchos."

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To conclude this discourse, let us always endeavour to go forward, and to fear exceedingly if we do not; for without doubt the devil wishes to entrap us, since it is not possible for a soul which has arrived so far should cease to go on increasing, because love is never idle; and therefore not to advance is a very bad sign, because a soul which has resolved to become the Spouse of God himself, and has already conversed (familiarly) with His Majesty, and has arrived at the point mentioned before, must not allow herself to sleep.

But in order that you may see what our Lord does for those souls whom He has already chosen for His spouses, let us commence speaking on the Sixth Mansion, and you will see how little all that is which we can suffer or do towards disposing ourselves for such great favours. It may be our Lord has appointed that I should be commanded to write this work, in order that casting our eyes on the reward, and considering how infinite His mercy is (since He is desirous of communicating Himself to such worms as we are), we may forget the insignificant pleasures of this life, and fixing our eyes upon His immensity, we may run after Him all on fire with love. May He enable me to explain something relating to such difficult subjects, for unless His Majesty guide my pen, I know very well it will be impossible. If what I shall say should not tend to your benefit, I beseech our Lord not to allow me to say anything, since His Majesty knows that, as far as I know myself, I have no other object than that His name may be praised. Let us strive to serve a Lord who rewards us so abundantly even in this life, and hence we may form some idea of what He will give us in heaven, where the tedious labours and dangers which trouble us in this life shall not disturb us, although, were there not here some danger of losing and offending Him, it would rather be a pleasure for these troubles to

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last till the end of the world, because we should be suffering for so good a God, who is our Lord and Spouse.

May His Majesty grant that we may deserve to do Him some service without so many imperfections, into which we are always falling, even in our good works. Amen.

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THE SIXTH MANSIONS.

CHAPTER I.

THE SAINT SHOWS HOW WHEN OUR LORD BEGINS TO BESTOW GREATER FAVOURS, THERE COME GREATER TROUBLES ALSO.—SOME OF THESE SHE MENTIONS, ETC.

LET us now speak, by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, concerning the "Sixth Mansions," wherein the soul remains wounded with the love of her spouse, and aspires more after solitude, removing (as far as her state allows) whatever may disturb this solitude. That internal vision* is so imprinted in the soul, that all her desire is to enjoy it again. I have already mentioned, that nothing is seen in this prayer which can properly be called "seeing," neither is anything seen by the imagination. I call it a sight, on account of the comparison I made use of.

The soul is now resolved to choose no other Spouse, but the Spouse pays no regard to her vehement desires of accomplishing the nuptials, because He wishes her to long after them more earnestly, and that such a favour—which exceeds all goods—should cost her something; and though all be little for so great a gain, yet I tell you, daughters, that the proof and security she has of possessing this gain, is no more than necessary to enable her to bear (this delay).

O! how many troubles, both internal and external, must be endured before we can enter the Sixth Mansions! Truly, when I sometimes reflect upon it, I fear that were these troubles known beforehand, it would be exceedingly difficult for human infirmity to

* Mentioned in the preceding Mansion.

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be able to bear them, and to resolve to endure them, however great might be the advantages which present themselves to her, *unless* the soul should have arrived at the Seventh Mansions, where she fears nothing, but rather embraces sufferings, and is resolved to endure them for the love of God. The reason is, because she is then almost always so united with His Majesty, that thence she derives all her courage.

I consider it good and proper to mention to you some of these troubles, which I know for certain are endured; perhaps all souls may not be led this way, though I much doubt whether those souls, which sometimes so truly enjoy heavenly things, can live free from earthly trials of one kind or another. Although I did not intend to speak about them, yet I considered afterwards, that where I do speak on them, it might give consolation to some soul in the like state, to understand what takes place in those on whom God bestows such favours, for then it really seems as if everything were lost.

I shall not proceed according to the order in which these troubles succeed, but only as they present themselves to my memory. I wish to begin with the least; and this comes from the clamour* which certain persons make with whom she lives (and from some with whom she never spoke, though during the course of her life they may have heard something of her), for they exclaim, "that she pretends to be very holy; that she goes to extremes, and does extravagant things, in order to deceive the world and make others appear worse, who are better Christians without these extravagancies.†" But they do not remember that nothing else is required, except endeavouring to observe diligently the duties which one's state requires. Those whom she considered her friends withdraw themselves from her,

* "Que es una grita de las personas con quien se trata."
† "Sin esas ceremonias."

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and are the very persons who afflict her the most, and who seem to grieve that this soul is (in their opinion) ruined and manifestly deluded; they are confident that these things come from the devil; that she will meet with the same end which such and such a one met with who was ruined; that through her fault virtue will decay, and that she deceives her confessors. They accordingly go to them and advise them (to be on their guard),* placing before them the examples of some, who by this very means have been ruined; a thousand other such scoffs and expressions of this kind they make use of. I know one† who was in great fear, lest she should find no one to hear her confession, because so many spoke against her; and as they said a great many things, I need not detain you by relating them here. But what is worse, these trials do not end soon, but last one's whole life, for one warns another to take care and have nothing to do with such kind of persons.

You may say, "Surely there are some who will speak *well* of her." O! my daughters, how few are there who believe her actions to be good, in comparison with the many who abominate them! Besides, this praise is a much greater trouble to her, than the troubles I have just mentioned, because the soul clearly sees, that if there be any good in her, it is God's gift, and not her own in any way, for she has a little before discovered, how exceeding poor she is, and how buried in sins; hence, such praise gives her intolerable pain, at least in the beginning, though it afterwards abates for these reasons.

First, because experience clearly discovers to her, that men speak well of a person, as hastily as they speak ill; and therefore she regards the one no more than the other. Secondly, because our Lord has given her greater light in discovering that nothing

* These words I have added.

† The saint no doubt alludes to herself.

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good belongs to her, but is the gift of His Majesty; and thus, forgetting that she has any share therein, and beholding the good as it were in a *third* person, she excites herself to praise God. Thirdly, because if she has observed, that some souls have been benefited by beholding the favours God bestows on her, she thinks His Majesty makes use of this means of having *her* esteemed virtuous, who is not so in reality, that souls may receive benefit thereby. Fourthly, having before her God's honour and glory more than her own, the temptation which comes in the beginning is removed, viz., that such praise will ruin her, as has happened to some; and hence, she pays little regard to her being esteemed, provided that by her means God may be praised once at least, no matter what may come afterwards.

These and other reasons lessen the great trouble which these praises cause, though some is nearly always experienced, except when the trouble is very slight, and it is not much observed. But it is a greater trouble without comparison, to see oneself publicly esteemed good without reason, than to suffer the troubles I have mentioned; for when the soul has arrived so far, as not to be much affected by these things, she is much less influenced by those troubles—nay, she rejoices at them, and they are to her as most delightful music. This is indeed the very truth; and the soul is hereby rather encouraged than dejected, since experience has now taught her the great benefit which she gains by this way. She thinks her persecutors do not offend God, but that His Majesty permits these trials for her great gain; and as she sees this clearly, she conceives for them a very particular and tender affection, considering them as her best friends, and as affording her much more gain than those who speak well of her.

Our Lord is also accustomed to send her grievous sicknesses. This is a much more severe trial, especially when the pains are acute; for if they be

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violent, they seem to me to be the most severe affliction that can be endured on earth. I speak of exterior trials, however numerous they may be; if they are such as I am speaking of, they disorder both the interior and exterior in such a manner, that the soul knows not what to do with herself in her anguish; she would more willingly endure any martyrdom (provided it were short) than suffer these pains. Still they do not last long in such intensity, for God at last does not give more than may be endured. His Majesty first bestows patience. But with regard to other great pains and infirmities of various sorts, I knew one,* who from the time that our Lord began to bestow the favour above mentioned—now forty years ago—cannot be said to have had one day without pain and other kinds of suffering,—I mean, want of health, besides other great troubles. It is true, that as she has been so very wicked, she esteemed them all but little, in comparison with hell, which she deserved. Others, who have not offended God so much, may be conducted by another way. But I would always choose the road of suffering, because I wish to imitate our Lord Jesus Christ, even if there were no other advantage, but there are always many advantages. But if I could speak of the *interior* afflictions and make them understood, O! how trifling would these others appear; but it is impossible to describe the way they are felt.

Let us begin with the affliction which arises from meeting with a confessor who is so cautious, and has such little experience, that he thinks nothing is secure; who fears everything, suspects everything, as if he saw something extraordinary: this is especially the case, if he should discover any imperfection in the soul which has these favours (for he thinks *they* ought to be angels on whom God bestows these favours,

* Here again it is evident the saint alludes to herself. (See her "Life." Dolman.)

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which is impossible while they live in the body); then he immediately ascribes everything either to the devil, or to melancholy. The world is indeed so full of this last, that I do not wonder the devil does so much harm by this way; and confessors have great reason to fear, and be very cautious. But the poor soul which is possessed with the same fear, and goes to her confessor as to her judge, who notwithstanding condemns her, cannot help feeling great trouble and uneasiness: only he who has experienced it, can tell what a grievous affliction it is.

Another trouble which such souls have to endure, especially if they have been wicked, is the thought that God allows them thus to be deceived on account of their sins. And though when His Majesty bestows upon them those favours, they feel secure, and cannot but believe it is no other spirit but that of God; yet these favours soon pass away, but the remembrance of their sins still continues; and beholding defects in themselves (for some are never wanting), this torment immediately returns again. When a confessor comforts a soul, she becomes a little calm, though she falls again into trouble; but when he *increases* her fear, her trouble becomes almost insupportable, especially when some aridities follow: then it seems she never remembered God, nor will she remember Him; and when she hears His Majesty spoken of, He seems to be one whom she had heard spoken of a long time ago.

But all this is nothing; for, in addition, she may further imagine that she is not able to inform her confessors,* and that she deceives them; and though she may observe things carefully, and be certain there is not even a first motion undiscovered, and though she may be often told "not to trouble herself,"—still all is of no avail, because the understanding is so obscured, that it is not capable of

* That is, she is unable, she thinks, to give them a correct account of the state of her soul.

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discovering the truth, but only of believing what the imagination represents to her (and this is then the mistress), and giving way to the impertinences which the devil is pleased to represent to her; and to him our Lord often gives leave to try her, and to make her imagine that she is abandoned by God,—for there are many things by which she is attacked. There is also an inward anguish, so painful and intolerable, that I know not to what it can be compared, except to the torments of hell, because in this tempest no comfort finds admittance. If she seek for it from her confessor, the devils seem to have combined with him, in order to make him torment her the more.

A confessor was once speaking with a person who had been in this torment; and finding it was a dangerous conflict, because so many things were united together, he told her to inform him when she was in the same conflict again. But she was always so much worse; and he afterwards understood that she could not help it, nor had she any power over herself. If she wished to read a book in her own language, she could no more understand it than if she were unable to read a letter, for her understanding was then incapable. In a word, there is no other remedy in this tempest but to hope in God's mercy, which by one word of His, or by some circumstance which seems casual, dispels everything so suddenly, that such a soul appears as if she had never been overcast, for she is now filled with light, and with much greater consolation. Like one who has escaped from a dangerous contest with victory, she continues to praise and give thanks to our Lord, for it was He who fought and conquered for her. She knows very clearly that she is able to do nothing; and it seems, that all the arms with which she might defend herself are in the hands of her enemy: she likewise sees plainly her own misery, and how little we can do if our Lord should forsake us. She seems to have no

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need of consideration in order to understand this truth, because the experience she already has therein (having seen herself wholly unfit) now makes her know her own nothingness; because though she be in a state of grace (since notwithstanding this storm she does not, nor would not, for any earthly thing offend God); yet it is so hidden, that she thinks she neither has, nor ever had, the *least spark* of the love of God; because if she should have done any good, or His Majesty have bestowed any favour upon her, all seems to her to have been a dream or imagination.

O Jesus! what a sight is it to behold a soul forsaken in this manner, and how little (as I have said) does any earthly consolation avail her! Do not think then, sisters, if sometimes you find yourselves in this state, that the rich, and those who enjoy their liberty more, have a surer remedy against these times. No, no! it seems to me to be like placing all the delights of the world before persons condemned to die, which would afford them no pleasure, but rather increase their torment; and so it is the same here: consolation must come from above, for here earthly comforts are of no avail. This great God desires we should know our own misery, and acknowledge Him for our king: this is very necessary for what I shall mention afterwards.

But what shall this poor soul do, if she continue thus for many days? If she pray vocally, it is as if she did not pray: I mean as to her receiving any consolation, for her interior does not admit of any. She does not even understand what she prays for, nor does she understand herself, though she may pray vocally. As for mental prayer, this is no time for it, because the powers are not prepared for it: even solitude does her great harm, and this proves another torment to her; for she cannot endure to be in company with any one, nor that any one should speak to her. However much she may strive against

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this, she still has a certain nausea in her exterior, which can be observed. It is impossible for him who endures this to be able to express it, because they are spiritual trials and pangs, for which no name can be found. The best remedy (that is, *not* for removing, for I know none such, but for enabling one to bear it) is attending to works of charity, and exterior employments, and hoping in God's mercy, which is never wanting to those who trust in Him. May He be blessed for ever. Amen.

CHAPTER II.

SHE SPEAKS OF CERTAIN WAYS BY WHICH OUR LORD AWAKENS THE SOUL; IN WHICH THERE SEEMS TO BE NO GROUNDS FOR FEAR, ETC.

With regard to other exterior troubles which the devils raise, they are certainly neither so usual (and therefore they need not be mentioned here), neither are they so painful, because whatever may be their effect, they never (in my opinion) incapacitate the powers, nor disturb the soul in this manner; for reason remains free to consider, that the devils can do no more than our Lord shall permit them; and when this * is not lost, all is little in comparison with what I have mentioned above.

I shall now proceed to mention other interior afflictions which are endured in these mansions, and I shall speak of different kinds of prayer and favours of our Lord; some of these, as is evident by the effects they leave in the body, are harder to be endured than the others. But they do not deserve the name of troubles, nor have we any reason to call them so, as they are such great favours of our Lord; and the soul, when in the midst of them, knows they are such, and that they are not merited by her. This great affliction comes, together with many

* That is, reason.

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others, when the soul is ready to enter the "Seventh Mansion." Some of them I will mention; for, to mention *all* is impossible: nor can they be described as they are in reality, because their origin * is more noble than those mentioned before; and as I was unable to explain better than I did those of a meaner kind, much less can I explain these. May our Lord give me His assistance in all His favours, through the merits of His Son. Amen.

It seems as if we have left our Dove long since, and yet we have not; for these are troubles which make her soar the higher. I will now begin to mention in what manner the Spouse acts towards her. Before He becomes wholly hers, He makes Himself greatly desired by certain ways, so subtle that the soul herself does not discover them, nor can (I think) make them intelligible, except to persons who have some experience therein. Some impulses are so delicate and subtle, as they proceed from the very interior of the soul, that I know no comparison suitable for the explanation of them. They are very different from all that we can procure ourselves, and likewise from the delights already mentioned: for very often, without imagining such a thing, or remembering God, His Majesty awakens one by lightning or thunder, as it were; and though no noise is heard, yet the soul clearly perceives she was called by God,—and this so evidently, that sometimes it makes her tremble all over, especially at first, and makes her utter complaints, though she may feel no pain. She feels herself to be most delightfully wounded,† but she neither knows *how*, nor by whom. She knows well it is a favour which is to be prized, and she wishes never to be healed: she complains in words of love, and these are external (she cannot do otherwise), to her Spouse, knowing Him to be present, but not willing to manifest Himself. This is a

* "Porque vienen de otro linaje mas alto que las dichas," &c.

† "Siente ser herida sabrosissimamente," &c.

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great but pleasant affliction; and if she desired not to have it, she cannot, nor does she ever wish it to leave her, for it gives her more delight than the suspension of the Prayer of Quiet, which has no such affliction attached to it.

I am very anxious, sisters, to make you understand this operation of love, but I know not how; for it seems a contradiction that the Beloved (though not seen) should let the soul clearly perceive He is in her; and He seems to call her by a sign so certain that it cannot be doubted, and with a whistle so penetrating that she cannot help hearing it; for it seems that when the Spouse thus speaks to her, she is in the Seventh Mansion; and all the people who are in the other mansions, viz. the senses, the imagination, and the faculties, dare not stir.

O my powerful God! how great are Thy secrets, and how different are spiritual things, from all that is seen or known here on earth! In no way is one able to express this small operation, in comparison with the very great ones which Thou dost work in souls. This (whistle) operates so powerfully in the soul, that she even consumes herself with longing, and yet knows not what to ask, because she is strongly persuaded that her God is with her. You will ask, if she knows so much, what does she desire? —what is it that troubles her? — what greater good does she desire? I know not: but this I know well, that she suffers, and that this pain pierces even into her very bowels, and that when He who wounds her draws forth the dart, He seems therewith to tear them away, so powerful are her sentiments of love.

I was thinking just now, that if a small spark should fly out from a pan of live coals (for such is my God), and fall upon a soul in such a way as to make her feel the fire enkindled, and yet not be sufficient to consume her, she continues in that pain which is so delightful, and when the sparks touch her they cause this operation. This seems to be the best

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comparison I can find; for this pleasant pain is not properly a pain, nor does it continue in the same degree, though sometimes it lasts a long while, and at other times it ceases immediately, as our Lord is pleased to communicate it, for it is not to be attained by human means. But though it sometimes lasts a long while, yet it goes and comes; in a word, it never stands still, and therefore it does not cease to inflame the soul, except when, as she is ready to be enkindled, the spark dies, and leaves her with a desire of suffering again that amorous pain which the spark causes. Here there is no reason to think that it comes from nature, or is caused by melancholy, much less that it is a delusion of the devil, or the effect of fancy, because it is a matter which shows us clearly that this motion comes from the place where our Lord is, who is immutable; and its operations are not like those of other devotions, in which the high transport of the delight may make us doubt. Here all the senses and powers, without any suspension, wonder what this is, without being able to prevent it, or increase, or take away (in my opinion) this delightful pain. Let the person on whom our Lord bestows this favour (and if he have already received it, he will easily understand it when he reads these words) give Him many thanks; for the person need not fear about its being a delusion; but lest he be ungrateful for so great a favour, let him also strive his utmost to serve Him, and in everything amend his life, and then he will see what will be the effect, and how he will receive still more and more. Though a certain person on whom this was bestowed spent some years with it, being highly pleased with this favour, yet even though she should have served our Lord for several years in great affliction, yet she was abundantly recompensed thereby. May He be blessed for ever. Amen.

You may perhaps ask, how can there be greater security in this than in other things? In my

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opinion, there *is* greater for these reasons. First, because the devil can never produce so pleasant a pain as this: he can, indeed, give a certain delight which seems spiritual, but to unite a pain so very great with a quiet and joy of the soul he is unable, for all his strength is outward; and his trials, when he sends them, are never, in my opinion, sweet or peaceful, but restless and turbulent. Secondly, because this delightful tempest arises from another quarter, far different from that over which he has any power. Thirdly, on account of the great benefits which remain in the soul, which are generally resolutions to suffer for God; a desire of having many afflictions, and being more determined to abandon all delights and earthly conversations, and other such like things.

That all this is no fancy is most evident, because though the devil may sometimes endeavour, he cannot counterfeit it, because it is a matter so well known, that in no way can it be feigned,—I mean, it cannot seem to be what it is not,—nor can it be doubted whether it be such. If there should be any such, be assured they are not true impulses, because these are as clearly perceived as a great sound is by the ears.

There is no probability of its being melancholy, because that forms all its conceits in the imagination; but this other proceeds from the interior of the soul. It is possible I may be mistaken; but till I hear stronger reasons from one who understands the subject, I shall adhere to my opinion. I know one who is very fearful respecting these delusions, so that you need not fear about this kind of prayer.

Our Lord also employs other ways of awakening the soul; for example, when she is praying vocally, and not thinking at all on any interior subject, a certain delightful ardour* seems suddenly to seize

* "Viene una inflamacion deleytosa," &c.

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her, as if so strong a scent should arise immediately as to communicate itself to all the senses (I do not say it *is* a scent, but I only make use of this as a comparison); but this is only to show that there the Spouse is exciting in the soul a delicious desire of enjoying Him, whereby she is prepared to do heroic acts, and to give praise to our Lord. The origin of this favour is that already mentioned; but here there is no pain, nor are the desires of enjoying God painful; and this is what the soul generally feels, for there seems to me little grounds to fear, for reasons already mentioned; but we must only endeavour to receive this favour with thanks.

CHAPTER III.

THE SAME SUBJECT IS CONTINUED; SHE SHOWS THE WAY BY WHICH GOD SPEAKS TO THE SOUL, ETC.

Our Lord has another way of awakening the soul, which, though in some sense it may seem a greater favour than the one already mentioned, yet may prove more dangerous, and therefore I will enter into a few particulars about it.

It is effected by certain discourses,* which in various ways He makes to the soul; some of these seem to come from without; others from the interior of the soul; others from the superior part, while others are so much in the exterior as to be heard with the ears, so that there seems to be a formed voice; sometimes, and often, it may be only fancy, especially if the persons have a weak imagination, or are subject to great melancholy. No attention is, in my opinion, to be paid to these two kinds of persons, though they tell us that they see, hear, and understand; nor are they to be troubled by being

* "Son unas Hablas con el Alma," &c.

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told it is the devil; but they should be heard as sick persons; and the prioress or confessor to whom they discover this should tell them "not to pay any regard to it, for this is not matter to serve God by, and the devil has deceived many by this way; but perhaps it will not happen thus to them." We may speak in this way in order not to afflict them.

But if the prioress and confessor tell them plainly "that it is melancholy," they will never believe it; they will swear they see and hear it because it seems so to them.

It is true, necessary care should be taken to prevent them attending too much to prayer, and they should be persuaded, as much as possible, not to heed such things, because the devil is accustomed to make use of such weak souls as these, if not to their own destruction, at least to the injury of others. Such things are always to be feared until the spirit be understood.* I consider it best to resist these "discourses" at first, because if they come from God they are a great help to advance us onwards; they also increase when they are thus tried. This is the case; but the soul should not be troubled too much, for truly she cannot do otherwise.

Let us now return to what I was saying about the "discourses" with the soul. The different kinds which I have mentioned may come either from God, or from the devil, or from one's own imagination. I shall mention (if I can), by the Divine assistance, the marks belonging to these different kinds, and also when these "discourses" become dangerous; for there are many souls among persons of prayer who perceive them; and I do not wish you, sisters, to imagine you do ill either in believing them, or not believing them. When they are only for your own pleasure, or to reveal to you your defects, let them come whence they may, or whether they be true or

* That is, until it is discovered whether they come from God or the devil.

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false, it matters little. One thing I warn you against, not to think the better of yourselves on their account, even though they should come from God, for our Lord spoke frequently with the Pharisees; all our good consists in the way we take advantage of these words. Pay no more attention to any "discourse" which is not exactly conformable to Scripture, than if you heard the devil himself; because though they come from your weak imagination, yet you must consider them as temptations about points of faith; therefore always resist them, that they may leave you, and they will vanish; for of themselves they have little strength.

Let us return, then, to the first point. It matters little for believing that they come from God, whether these words proceed from the interior or superior part, or from the exterior. The most certain signs they can have are, in my opinion, the following:—

The first and truest are the authority and dominion which such "discourses" bring with them, viz., by speaking and working at the same time. I will explain my meaning a little clearer. A soul, for example, is quite overpowered by affliction and that internal restlessness mentioned before, together with aridity, and a darkness upon the understanding. But by one such word, bidding her "not to be troubled," she is freed from aridity, calmed, wonderfully enlightened, and all that sadness dispelled which she had before; hence, if the whole world, and all the learned men therein, had united together in giving her reasons for not being grieved, they could not, by all their endeavours, remove that affliction.*

She is troubled because her confessor and others tell her "she is possessed by an evil spirit;" but by one word only, saying, "It is I, be not afraid," she is freed from all fears, and becomes very cheerful, and imagines no one is able to make her believe the

* The saint here speaks from her own experience. (See her "Life."

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contrary. She is exceedingly anxious about certain affairs of consequence, the success of which she cannot foresee; but she hears *one* tell her: "Be quiet, for everything will go on well;" then she is certain and without care, and so with regard to many other things of this kind.

The second sign is, a great quiet remaining in the soul, with a devout and peaceful recollection, and a disposition to praise God. O my Lord! if one word conveyed by one of Thy attendants have such force (at least, in this mansion), a word, not spoken by our Lord Himself, but by an angel, what wilt Thou leave in a soul, which by love is united to Thee, and Thou to her?

The third sign is, that these words are not forgotten for a long time, and some are *never* forgotten; and as to those words which sometimes we hear spoken in this world, I mean by men, however grave and learned these persons may be; yet their words are not so deeply impressed on our memories, and much less do we give any credit to them, if they relate to things future, as these other words do, which leave such a great certainty after them, that sometimes in things which seem utterly impossible, there arises some doubt in the undertaking, whether they will prove true or false, and it wavers a little accordingly; yet there is in the soul herself such a deep security, that she cannot be persuaded otherwise (though everything seems to go against what she has heard); and though some years pass away, while she remains in this confidence—that God will employ other means unknown to men, and that in the end the things will come to pass (as indeed they do); still, as I said, she cannot help suffering when she sees so many obstacles against her; for the operations which she had at the time she heard the words, and the certainty which they left in her that they came from God, having now passed away, these doubts begin to arise, whether the words came from

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the devil or the imagination; but when she *hears* the words, she has no doubts or fears whatever; she would even die for this truth.

But, as I said, what is the devil able to effect by these imaginations, which he certainly suggests—in order to afflict and intimidate the soul, especially if it be a matter wherein, if that which is heard should succeed, some great good to souls is likely to follow, and that works would be done, conducing much to the service of God, and that there be some great difficulty connected with them—what, I repeat, is the devil able to do? He at least weakens faith, for it is a terrible evil not to believe that God is able to perform works, which our understandings cannot comprehend.

But notwithstanding all these combats, though there are some who tell the same person that these discourses are extravagancies (I mean confessors, who are consulted in such cases), and notwithstanding the bad success which happens, and which makes the confessors imagine the things cannot be accomplished; yet I know not how, but there remains in the soul so bright a spark of security, that the things will happen, though all other hopes be dead, that this spark of security cannot but remain alive. In fine, the word of our Lord (as I said) is accomplished, and the soul is so joyful and glad, that she wishes always to be praising His Majesty; and this so much the more, from seeing *that* accomplished which was told her, and on account of the work itself, though it concerns her much.

I know not how it happens, that the soul esteems the accomplishment of these words so highly, that I believe she would not feel so much—were she herself found to have uttered some untruth, as if she could do otherwise—where she says nothing but what is told her. A certain person very frequently called to mind the prophet Jonas, when he feared whether Nineveh would be destroyed. In a word, since it is

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the spirit of God, it is proper we should show this fidelity to Him, by desiring He may not be considered a deceiver, since He is truth itself; hence the joy of such a soul is excessive, when after many windings and in most difficult matters, she sees the fulfilments of what she heard; and though the same person might have to endure great afflictions, she would rather suffer them than not see *that* accomplished, which she was certainly convinced our Lord spoke.

All persons have not, perhaps, this infirmity — if it be an infirmity, for I cannot condemn it as an evil. If these words come from the imagination, there will be none of these signs, nor certainty, nor peace, nor internal delight. It may, however, happen (and I know some to whom it so happened), that being deeply absorbed in the prayer of quiet and in a spiritual slumber (for some have such a weak constitution or imagination, though I know not the cause, that in this high recollection they are indeed so out of themselves, that exteriorly they seem without sense; and all their senses are so asleep that they resemble a person who is asleep, and perhaps they are really asleep), they imagine, as in a dream, that some one speaks to them, and that they also see things; and they think they come from God, but in the end they leave effects resembling those left by a dream. It may likewise be, that when they ask something of our Lord with earnestness and love, they think they are told what they desire, and this sometimes happens. But one who has much experience in the discourses of God cannot, in my opinion, be deceived herein.

There is much to be feared with regard to the devil and the imagination; but if there be the above-mentioned marks, the person may rest assured such words come from God, though not in the same way as if what were spoken related to some important matter, and it was to be performed by the same

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person, or the discourse related to the affairs of a third person; then he who would even attempt or think of executing it, without the advice of a learned confessor, who was also discreet and a servant of God, would do very wrong, however clearly he might think or understand that it came from God. The reason is, because His Majesty wishes it; and this is not neglecting to do what His Majesty commands, since He has told us to consider our confessor as in His place, where there is no doubt of their being His words; and these help to animate us, if the matter be difficult: and our Lord, when he pleases, will also suggest the truth to the confessor and make him believe that it is His spirit; but when He does not please, they are no longer bound. To act differently from what we have been told, and to be guided herein by our own opinion, I consider to be a very dangerous practice. I warn you then, sisters, in the name of our Lord, to beware, lest this ever happen to *you*.

There is another kind of language with which God speaks to a soul (I consider it quite certain that it comes from Him), by a certain intellectual vision, of which I shall speak hereafter. This takes place in the interior of the soul, and she seems most clearly to hear with her ears those words spoken by our Lord himself; and so secretly, that the very manner of hearing them, together with the operations caused by the vision itself, gives her a certainty that the devil can have no share therein. It leaves after it wonderful effects, which tend to make us believe the vision to be true; at least, there is a certainty that it does not proceed from the imagination, and whoever observes it may always be certain, for the following reasons.

First, because there is a difference in the clearness of the discourse; for it is so plain, that the soul remembers even every syllable of what she has heard: she likewise knows in what particular style the words

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are spoken, though all may have but one meaning; whereas that which arises in the fancy or imagination is not spoken so clearly, nor so distinctly, but is like something uttered by a person half asleep. Secondly, because what is heard was often not thought of before; I mean, it comes unexpectedly; and sometimes when the person is engaged in conversation, an answer is given to that which suddenly passes through our thoughts, or to that which passed through them before; and often it is in things of which we never had any remembrance that they had been or would be; and hence the imagination could not have framed them, in order that the soul might be deceived in fancying to herself what she had not desired, nor wished, nor taken notice of.

Thirdly, because then * we are like one who hears only: but when it arises from the imagination, it is as if one is composing, by little and little, what he himself wishes to be said to him. Fourthly, because the words are very different, and one of them includes a great deal, which our understanding cannot compose so easily. Fifthly, because together with the words, much more is often understood (by a way which I am unable to explain)—than the words import. But of this mode of understanding I shall speak more at length elsewhere; for it is a very high subject, and contributes much to the praise of our Lord.

Respecting these several ways, and the difference between them, there have been, and now are, some persons very doubtful. I particularly know one who has tried them by experience; still there may be others who could not fully understand them. But the person that I speak of has, I know, considered them with great attention: our Lord very often bestowed this favour upon her. The greatest doubt which she had was, whether she was deceived by her

* That is, when God speaks.

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own fancy or no in the beginning; for when it is, the devil may soon be discovered, though he has so many subtleties that he can easily put on the appearance of a spirit of light; and, in my opinion, this he will do by speaking so very clearly, that there is no question whether the words are heard, just as in the case when they come from the Spirit of Truth. But he cannot counterfeit the effects mentioned above, nor leave in the soul such peace and light; he will rather leave restlessness and confusion, though he can do little or no harm if the soul be humble, and do what I have mentioned, though she must not stir to do anything of herself, whatever she may hear. If the favours and caresses come from our Lord, let her carefully observe whether she consider herself to be better for them; and if, from hearing more loving expressions, she do not become more humble and confounded, then let her be assured that it is *not* the Spirit of God. It is most certain that (if it be the good spirit*) how much greater the favour is, so much the less does the soul esteem herself; and she remembers her sins the more, and forgets more her own interest, and employs more frequently her will and memory in seeking only God's honour and glory, without attending to her own profit. She proceeds, too, with more caution, lest in anything she might neglect doing God's will; she likewise understands more certainly that she never merited these favours, but rather that she deserved hell.

Since, then, all these things, and the favours she receives in prayer, produce these effects, let not the soul be troubled, but trust in the mercy of our Lord, who is faithful, and will not suffer the devil to delude her, though it is always best for her to live in fear.

Possibly some one whom our Lord does not conduct by this way will imagine, that such souls may

* Not in the original.

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refuse to listen to these words; and if they be interior, may so occupy themselves as not to admit them, and by this means may be free from such dangers. I answer, it is impossible. I do not speak of those words which the fancy forms, which by not too eagerly desiring some things, and by not doing anything suggested by the imagination, find some remedy. But here these words have no remedy; for the same Spirit of God which speaks, fixes all other thoughts, which attend in such a way to what is spoken, that it seems to me to be something more likely (and so I believe it is) for a person who is very quick at hearing, not to hear another who spoke both near and loudly to him; for this person might not notice the other who speaks, or his thoughts and understanding might be engaged in some other way. But this cannot be the case here; for there are no ears to stop, nor power to think, except on what is spoken to her. For He who could stop the sun at the request of Joshua, can also stop the powers and the whole interior: hence the soul plainly perceives, that another Lord governs this castle, who is greater than she is, and this thought produces great devotion and humility in her; thus she has no remedy for avoiding this. May His divine* Majesty grant we may ever strive to please Him, and (as I said) entirely forget ourselves. Amen. May our Lord grant that I may have correctly explained what I intended, and that it may serve as some direction for those who receive such favours.

* The saint here prefixes the word "divina" before "Majestad."

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CHAPTER IV.

THE SAINT EXPLAINS WHEN GOD SUSPENDS THE SOUL BY TRANCE, ECSTASY, OR RAPTURE, AND SHOWS THAT GREAT COURAGE IS NECESSARY FOR RECEIVING SUCH A FAVOUR.

WHAT rest can the poor butterfly take with the labours and other afflictions already mentioned? All serve to inflame her desires of enjoying her Spouse; and as His Majesty knows our weakness, He continues to prepare her, by these and many other things, to take courage and choose Him for her Spouse. You will perhaps laugh at my saying this, and consider it foolishness, because every one of you will think there is no need of courage, and that no woman is so base but would be willing to be espoused to a king. I believe so too, as regards an *earthly* king; but I tell you, to be espoused to the King of Heaven requires more (courage) than you imagine; for our nature is too mean and timorous for so sublime a thing. I consider it certain, also, that this would be impossible if God did not bestow the dowry.* Here you see what His Majesty does, in order to conclude these espousals, which I believe are ratified when He takes away the senses by raptures; for if in the enjoyment of them our nature should see itself so near this great Majesty, it would *perhaps be impossible to continue alive.*

I speak of *true* raptures, and not of certain infirmities of women which we often see; for everything seems to us to be rapts or ecstasies: and I think I have mentioned before, some constitutions are so delicate that they seem to be dying if they have only [illegible] of Quiet.

[illegible] there some kinds of raptures which [illegible] have had a great deal to do with [illegible]ons, though I do not know

* "Se non ci dasse la dote, non saremmo mai atte a questo, ne fosse diesse Caudal," &c.

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whether I shall be able to explain them, as elsewhere* I have done, when writing on this subject. I wish also to mention some other things which happen here, which for several reasons it seems proper to repeat again, if for nothing else but that the Mansions might go on together in order.

One kind of rapture is, when the soul (though not in prayer), being moved by a word which she remembers or hears from God, His Majesty seems to increase the spark (before mentioned) from the interior of the soul, being moved with compassion to see her so long afflicted with the desire of Him; for being quite inflamed, she becomes, like the phœnix, entirely renewed, and (as one may piously believe) her faults are then forgiven, supposing, however, she has the disposition, and makes use of the means which the Church prescribes.

Being thus pure, He unites her to Himself, without any one knowing it, except only themselves: even the soul herself does not know it in such a way as to be able afterwards to relate it, though she then has her interior senses; for she is not like one in a swoon or fit, where nothing is seen interiorly or exteriorly.

What I understand in this case is, that the soul was never so alive to the things of God, nor had so clear a light and knowledge of His Majesty as she had then. This may seem impossible; because if the faculties be so absorbed that we may say they are dead, and likewise the senses, how can it be known that the soul understands? This mystery I cannot comprehend, and perhaps no other creature, but only the Creator himself. Many other things also I cannot understand which happen in this state, —I mean in these two last Mansions, which may well be united together, for there is an entrance open to both. But because in this last Mansion some things are not manifested to those who have not

* In her "Life."

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entered into it, I thought it best to divide them. When the soul is in this suspension, and our Lord considers it good to reveal certain secrets to her (such as those which relate to heaven), and visions seen by the imagination, these she can afterwards relate, because they are so imprinted on her memory that she can never forget them. But when they are intellectual visions, she is not able to relate many of them, because then some of them are so sublime, that it is fit for those who live on earth to know them, though when such souls return to their senses they can relate many of them.

Some of you do not, perhaps, understand what a vision is, especially intellectual ones. This I will explain at the proper time, since he has commanded me to do so who has the power; and though it may seem a foolish undertaking, still it may perhaps be useful to some souls. But you will ask me if afterwards there is no remembrance of these high favours which our Lord here bestows on the soul, what use are they to her? O daughters! so exceedingly useful are they, that their utility cannot be expressed; for she may not be able to mention them, yet they are deeply imprinted in the interior of the soul, and can never be forgotten. "But if they have no representation,* nor are understood by the faculties, how can they be remembered?" This I do not understand; but I know well, that there remain fixed in the soul certain truths of the greatness of God, that even without faith, which tells her who He is, and that she is bound to believe Him to be God, she would adore Him as such from that instant, just as Jacob did when he saw the ladder on which angels were ascending and descending. Then, no doubt, he told other secrets, which he was unable to relate; and had he not had a more internal light, he would not have discovered such high mysteries.

* "Pues si no tienen imagen," &c.

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I know not whether I am explaining exactly what I am saying, because, though I have heard it, I am not sure that I remember it properly. Neither was Moses able to relate all that he saw in the "bush," but only what God wished him to mention. But had not God discovered to his soul other secrets in a most certain manner, in order that he might see and believe it was God, he would never have been able to endure so many and such great labours. Moses must have learnt amidst the thorns of that "bush" such great things as encouraged him to do what he did for the people of Israel.

And so we, sisters, in the hidden things of God, must not seek out reasons in order that we may understand them; but as we believe He is powerful, so it is evident we ought to believe, that a worm, having such limited power as we have, is unable to comprehend His greatness. Let us praise Him exceedingly, that He is pleased to let us know some of them.

I have been wishing to hit upon some comparison, by which I might explain something of this subject on which I am now speaking; and I believe there is none which exactly suits: however, I will mention the following:—

Suppose you enter a room (or closet, as I think it is called) of a king, or some great lord, where is a great variety of several kinds of crystal glasses, porcelain, and many other vessels, placed in such order, that on entering they are almost all seen. I was once conducted into such a room, in the house of the duchess of Alva, where being on my journey (for founding a convent), obedience required me to remain two days, at the earnest request of this lady. When I entered the room I was amazed, thinking what could be the use of such a variety of things; and I perceived our Lord might be praised on our beholding so many different things. This com-

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parison comes in very seasonably, since it will serve my purpose here. Now though I remained there only for a short time, such abundance was to be seen that I immediately forgot everything, and I no more remembered all the vases than if I had never seen them; nor could I tell what shape they were, but only in general I remembered having seen them. And so it is here, since the soul has been united with God, and admitted into this chamber of the empyreal heaven (which we ought to have in the interior of our souls, for it is evident that since God resides in them he possesses some of these mansions); and though when the soul is thus in an ecstasy, our Lord is not always pleased she should see these secrets (for being so absorbed in the enjoyment of Him, she is content with so great a good), yet sometimes He is pleased that this suspension should leave her, and then immediately she sees what is in that room. Thus, when she returns to herself afterwards, she retains the representation of the greatnesses which she beheld; but she can mention none of them, nor does her natural ability attain to more than He was pleased to allow her supernaturally to see. I already acknowledge that it appears something was seen, and that it is a vision seen by the imagination. I do not wish to say it *is* such, nor to speak of it here, but only of the *intellectual vision.* Being unlearned, my ignorance is not able to explain anything properly; hence if what I have hitherto said be correct, I know clearly it is not *I* who spoke it.

For my part, I consider that if sometimes, when the soul is in these raptures, she does not understand these secrets which God communicates to her, they are *no* raptures, but some natural weakness; for it may happen to persons of a weak constitution (as we women are), that, by using force, the spirit may overpower nature, and make these persons remain thus absorbed, as I think I have shown when

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speaking on the Prayer of Quiet. These have not the character of raptures, for in *true* raptures I believe that God wholly ravishes the soul with Himself, and He continues discovering to her, as if to His own spouse, some small part of the kingdom which she has gained; since whatever is in this great God is immense — it is everything.* He does not wish to have any disturbance from anything, either from the faculties or from the senses, but he immediately commands all the gates of these mansions to be shut; that gate only where He resides is left open for us to enter at. Blessed be such great mercy, and justly will *they* be accursed who will not make use of it, but lose so great a Lord.

O my sisters! what we abandon for Him is nothing, and what we do is nothing, or what we can do for such a God, who is thus willing to communicate Himself to a worm. And if we hope to enjoy even in this life so great a good, what are we doing? —why do we delay?—what recompense can be made us, for being hindered only one moment in our search after this Lord, as the spouse did through the streets and roads? O! what a mockery is everything in the world, if it do not advance us, and help us to reach this Lord, even though all its delights, riches, and pleasures were to last for ever, and were as great as can be imagined. All is filth and nastiness, when compared with these treasures which are to be enjoyed without end; and even *these* are nothing to be compared with possessing the Lord of all these treasures,—the Lord of heaven and earth.

O the blindness of men! When—when will this clay be taken from our eyes? Though amongst us who are religious it does not seem so great as to blind us, yet I see some small motes, — some little specks, which, if we allow them to grow up, are able to do us great mischief. But, for the love of God,

* "Lo que por poca cosa que sea—es todo," are words I cannot translate.

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sisters, let us turn these defects to our advantage, in order to discover our misery, and let them clear our sight the more, as the clay cured the blind man, whom our Spouse healed. Seeing ourselves, then, to be so imperfect, let us be more fervent in beseeching Him to draw good out of our miseries, that so we may please His Majesty in everything.

I have wandered much from my subject. But pardon me, sisters, and be assured that having arrived at these wonders of God's greatness * (I mean, having spoken about them), I cannot help feeling great grief when I see what we lose by our own fault; for though it be true they are favours which God bestows on whom He pleases, yet, did we love His Majesty as He loves us, He would give them to *every one*. He desires nothing else but to see some one on whom to bestow them, since thereby His riches are not lessened. But to return to what I was saying. The Spouse now commands the doors of the mansions, and those of the castle, and the places around it also to be shut; for, as He wishes to ravish this soul, He takes away her breath in such a manner, though the other senses sometimes continue a little longer, yet the speech is quite taken away. At other times she is deprived of all the senses at once; the hands and body grow so cold, that there seems to be no life; and sometimes no breath is perceived. This lasts for a short time (I mean in this state); for when this wonderful suspension leaves her for a time, the body seems in some degree to return to itself and take breath, that it may afterwards die again, and so give greater life to the soul; still this ecstasy does not continue long.

But though it is taken away, the will remains absorbed, and the understanding is so alienated † (and this lasts for a day, or several days), that it seems

* Literally, "Que llegada à estas Grandezas de Dios."

† "Tan enagenado." *Ravished* would perhaps be a better word than "alienated."

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incapable of attending to anything except to what tends to excite the will to love. To this it is quite alive, but asleep as to placing its affections on any creature. When the soul returns to herself again, what is her confusion, and what most earnest desires has she not of giving herself wholly to God in whatever ways He may wish to employ her! If the former prayers produce such effects as those mentioned before, what will not such a sublime favour as *this* produce? She wishes she had a thousand lives, in order to give them all to God, and that all things on earth were tongues, in order that they might praise Him in her stead. Her desires of doing penance are very great, nor does she suffer much in performing it, for the power of love makes her scarcely feel whatever she does, and she sees clearly the martyrs did not do much in suffering their torments, because with this assistance from our Lord suffering becomes easy; and hence such souls complain to His Majesty when an opportunity of suffering is not given to them.

When this favour is bestowed upon them in private, they value it very highly, because when it happens to them before other people, the shame and confusion it leaves is so great, that it deprives the soul in some manner of the suspension she enjoys by the trouble and anxiety she feels from thinking what those will say who saw it. She knows the malice of the world, and that men will not perhaps view it as it ought to be; for *that* which they should consider as an opportunity for praising our Lord, they will probably make use of for throwing out censures and rash judgments.

This trouble seems to me to be, in some manner, a want of humility (though she cannot help it), because if such a person desire to be despised, what does she care for their censures? One who was in this affliction heard these words from our Lord: "Be not troubled, for either they will praise me, or find

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fault with thee; in either of these two ways thou wilt be a gainer." I knew afterwards that this person was exceedingly animated by these words, which I here relate to you in order to help any who may be in the like affliction. It seems our Lord wishes all to understand that this soul is already His, and that no one must touch it. Men may meddle with the body, with honour, and estates, for from all of them His Majesty will derive glory; but they must not touch the soul. And if she do not, by a very culpable boldness, leave her Spouse, He will protect her against all the world, and all the powers of hell.

I know not whether I have been able to make you understand *something* of what a rapture is (for, to explain it fully is, as I said, impossible); and I think nothing has been lost by what I have said, thereby endeavouring to understand what it really is. In *counterfeit* raptures the effects are very different (I say "counterfeit," not that the person who has them intends to deceive, but she *is* deceived); and as the marks and effects do not correspond with so great a favour, such a person falls into such disgrace, that justly is another not believed afterwards on whom our Lord really bestows the favour. May He be praised and blessed for ever and ever. Amen. Amen.

CHAPTER V.

THE SAME DISCOURSE IS CONTINUED.

THERE is another kind of rapture which I call the "flight of the spirit"* (though it is the same in substance as the ordinary rapture, yet it is felt to be very different in the interior), for sometimes there is

* "Buelo del espiritu le llamo yo."

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perceived on a sudden a movement of the soul so swift,* that the spirit seems to be hurried away with a violent speed. This at first causes great fear, and therefore I told you that the person on whom God intends to bestow these favours stands in need of great courage, and likewise of faith and confidence, and perfect resignation into the hands of our Lord, to do with the soul whatever He pleaseth.

Do you think it is a small trouble for one to enjoy his senses perfectly, and see his soul carried away (we read that some have even their bodies raised also) without knowing whither it goes, or who carries it, or how it is carried? In the commencement of this sudden movement, there is not so much certainty that it comes from God. But is there any means of resisting it?—None whatever; rather it is all the worse for the soul, for I know this is the case with a certain person; hence it seems God wishes to signify to the soul that, as she has so often and so truly resigned herself into His hands, and with so sincere a will wholly offered herself to Him, she must understand that now she has no more right to herself, and hence she is evidently raised up with a more impetuous motion. The person of whom I spoke resolved to act no more than the straw does when it is attracted by amber (if you ever noticed it), and to surrender herself into His hands, who is so powerful; for she sees it is the safest plan for her to make a virtue of necessity. And because I mentioned *straw*, it is certain that as easily as a strong man can lift it up, so can our strong and mighty giant lift up the soul. Thus it seems, that whereas before the cistern of water we spoke of (I suppose in the Fourth Mansion, for I do not well remember) was filled with great sweetness and stillness (I mean without noise); so now this great God, who keeps in the springs of water, and allows not the sea to overflow its bounds,

* "Un movimiento tan acelerado del alma," &c.

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here lets loose the streams and currents from which the water came; and this running with great violence makes such a flood, that it raises on high this little vessel of our soul. On this account, as neither a ship, nor a pilot, nor those who command it, are able to make the raging and furious billows let it rest where the captain wishes; so much less can the interior of the soul remain where it would desire; nor can it cause the senses and faculties to do more than what they are commanded, for here no notice is to be taken of the exterior.

I am certainly astonished, sisters, by merely writing these remarks, considering how the immense power of this great King and Emperor is here manifested to us: what will *he* feel, then, who experiences this same power? For my own part, I believe that if His Majesty discovered Himself to the most abandoned men of the world, in the same manner as He does to these souls, they would avoid offending Him, —if not through love, at least through fear. O! how much are those obliged who have been instructed by so sublime a way, to endeavour with all their strength never to displease this Lord! By Him I beseech you, sisters (I speak to those on whom our Lord has bestowed such favours), that you be not negligent and content with *only* receiving; consider that whoever owes much should also pay much. For this, great courage is necessary, for it terrifies one exceedingly; and if our Lord did not bestow this on the soul, she would always be in great affliction; and if He did not animate her, she would, no doubt, be disheartened, considering how His Majesty acts with her, and reflecting also upon herself, that serves Him so little, in comparison to what she is obliged to do; and this very little which she does is full of failings, imperfections, and tepidity. In order, therefore, that she may not remember how imperfectly she performs any work (if she does any), she thinks it best to endeavour to forget it, and to place her sins

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continually before her eyes, relying on God's mercy, and beseeching Him that, since she has nothing to pay him with, the pity and mercy which He has always shown towards sinners may supply her defect. He may, perhaps, give her the answer which He gave to a certain person who was in great distress before a crucifix, from considering that she never had anything to give to God, or to abandon for His sake; to whom the Crucified said, comforting her by these words: "That He gave her all the labours and pains which He suffered in His passion, and that she was to consider them as her own, and offer them to His Father." The soul immediately became so rich and so consoled (as I heard from the person herself), that she cannot yet forget it; but every time that she sees herself so miserable, the remembrance of these words animates and consoles her.

Many such things I could mention here, which I know well, by having spoken with so many persons of devotion and prayer; but lest you might think I was alluding to myself, I will not speak of them. This seems to me very useful for showing you how much our Lord is pleased with our knowing ourselves, and with our continually endeavouring to consider again and again our poverty and misery, and how we have nothing except what we have received. Hence, my sisters, courage is necessary for this and for many other things which happen to a soul, which our Lord has already conducted to this state; and, in my opinion, if there be humility, *more* courage is necessary for this latter favour than for any other, — I mean, for considering our poverty and misery. May our Lord, in His mercy, grant it to us.

Let us return now to this sudden rapture of the spirit. The rapture takes place in such a manner that the soul really seems to go out of the body, and yet, on the other hand, it is evident that the person is not dead,—at least, she cannot say whether for a

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few moments* the soul be in the body or not. It seems to her that she has been altogether in another region quite different from this world in which we live, and there another light is shown to her very different from this here below; and though she should employ all her life long in trying to form an idea of this and other wonders, yet it would be impossible to understand them. She is in an instant taught so many things together, that should she spend many years in arranging them in her thoughts and imagination, she could not remember the one thousandth part of them. This is not an intellectual but an imaginary vision; and it is seen with the eyes of the soul much better than we see things here with the eyes of the body; and without words certain things are discovered to her: if she should see any of the saints, she knows them as well as if she had conversed with them for a length of time.

At other times, together with what she beholds with the eyes of the soul, other wonders are there represented to her by the "intellectual vision," particularly a multitude of angels with their Lord; and without seeing anything with her corporeal eyes, by a wonderful knowledge† which I cannot express, this of which I am speaking and many other things are represented to her which are not to be mentioned. Whoever shall experience these things himself, and shall have better abilities than I possess, may perhaps be able to explain them, however difficult they may appear to be. Whether all these things take place in the body, or no, I cannot say,—at least, I would not swear it is in the body, nor that the body is without the soul. I have often thought how, when the sun is in the heavens, his rays have such force, that without the sun changing his place they immediately reach this world; and so it is here, for the soul and the spirit (which are one

* "Por algunos instantes."

† "Por un conocimiento admirable, que yo no sabrè dezir."

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and the same, just as the sun and the rays are), though remaining in her place, that is, in the body, may, by virtue of the heat communicated to her from the true Sun of Justice, soar above herself in the superior part.

In a word, I know not what I say; the truth is, that with the same swiftness with which a bullet passes out of a gun when the fire is applied, so does a flight take place in the interior of the soul (I know no other name for it), which, though it makes no noise, still causes a movement so manifest, that in no manner can it be taken as the effect of fancy. And as the soul is, as it were, out of herself, as far as I can understand, great secrets are revealed to her; and when she returns again to her senses, it is with such immense gain, and with such contempt for all earthly things, that everything seems mean to her in comparison with what she has seen. Ever after she lives in the world with great regret, and she cares not at all for any of those things which once used to seem beautiful to her. It seems our Lord was pleased to show her something of that land towards which she is going (as those of the people of Israel who were sent beforehand to the land of promise brought back things which showed the nature of the country), in order that she may endure the difficulties of this journey, and may know where she must hasten to find true repose. And though that which passes away so quickly may seem to you not to be very profitable, yet so great are the benefits it leaves in the soul, that he only who has experienced them can tell their worth. Hence we may clearly see that such things do not come from the devil; and that they should come from our own imagination is impossible, since the devil can represent nothing which leaves in the soul such great effects, —such peace,—such quiet and profit; and especially three things are left in a high degree.

The first is, a knowledge of the greatness of God;

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for the more we see of it, the more we are able to understand it. The second is, the knowledge of ourselves, and humility in considering how base we are, in comparison with the Creator of so many wonderful things, and how we have dared to offend Him —how we dare not look upon Him. The third is, a contempt for all earthly things, — unless there be some which she can apply to the service of so great a God.

These are the jewels which the Spouse begins to give to His Bride; and they are so valuable, that she will be most careful of them, for these visions are so engraven in her memory, that I believe it is impossible for her to forget them till she gets possession of them for ever, unless it be through her own fault. But the Spouse who gives them to her is able to bestow His grace upon her, so that she may never lose them. But to return to the courage, of which she stands in need: do you think it so trifling a matter? The soul really seems separated from the body, because she sees the senses lost, and does not understand for what purpose. It is necessary, then, that He who gives all the other gifts should give *this* also. You will reply, "This fear is well rewarded." I say the same. May He be blessed for ever, who can give so liberally, and may His Majesty be pleased to grant, that we may be worthy to serve Him. Amen.

CHAPTER VI.

SHE MENTIONS SOME OF THE EFFECTS OF THE PRAYER OF WHICH SHE SPOKE IN THE PRECEDING CHAPTER, ETC.

From these sublime favours, the soul so ardently desires wholly to enjoy Him who bestows them on her, that she lives in a great though delightful tor-

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ment, and she has also a certain longing to die; and hence, with continual tears, does she beg of God that He would take her out of this exile. Everything that she sees in it wearies her. In solitude she finds some ease, and then this sorrow comes upon her immediately: but without it she is not content. In a word, this poor butterfly meets with no repose that lasts for any time. Still, as the soul is so full of tender love, any opportunity which presents itself to her of enkindling this fire more and more makes her take wing. Hence in this mansion raptures are very common, without her having any means to avoid them, even when they take place in public. Persecutions and slanders immediately follow; for though she desires to be without fears, they will not leave her, because there are many who cause them, especially confessors. And though, on the one hand, she seems to have great security in the interior of the soul, especially when she is all alone with God; yet, on the other hand, she is in great affliction, because she fears lest the devil might deceive her, so as to make her offend Him whom she loves so tenderly. She is little troubled about what people say against her, except when her own confessor afflicts her, as if she could do more. She does nothing but entreat every one to pray for her, and beseech His Majesty to guide her by some other way (she is told to do so), "because this is so extremely dangerous." But as she has found such great benefit by the other way, she cannot help thinking that she is walking (according to what she sees, and hears, and knows) in the commandments of God, and this is the path which conducts her to heaven. Hence she cannot but help desiring this way, though she might wish not to do so: still she resigns herself into the hands of God. Then, again, her inability not to desire (what she is told) troubles her likewise, because she thinks it is an act of dis-

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obedience to her confessor; and it seems to her, that in obeying him, and endeavouring not to offend our Lord, the remedy lies for not being deceived. Hence she would not *willingly* commit a venial sin, even though she were to be cut in pieces; and she is exceedingly afflicted to see, how she cannot be free from committing many wilfully.

God gives these souls so great a desire of not offending Him in the least thing, and, if possible, of not committing even the slightest imperfection, that for this reason alone, were there no other, she would fly from all men. She envies those who live, and those who formerly lived in deserts. On the other hand, she would have no objection to be placed in the midst of the world, in order to try if she could be instrumental in making only one soul praise God more earnestly. If a woman, she grieves that her sex puts a restraint upon her which prevents her from doing it;* and she envies those exceedingly who have the power of crying out with a loud voice, and of proclaiming who this great God of hosts is.†

O poor butterfly! thou art bound by many chains, which will not allow thee to fly as far as thou desirest. Have pity on her, my God! Dispose everything now in such a manner, that so she may in some degree fulfil her desires for Thy honour and glory. Regard not her small merits, nor her natural baseness. Thou art able, O Lord! to cause the mighty sea to retire, and great Jordan to divide, that the children of Israel may pass over. But do not pity her; for, aided by Thy power, she will be able to bear many crosses. She is determined to do

* That is, going into the world.

† "Ha gran embidia à los que tienen libertad para dar bozes publicando, Quien es este gran Dios de las Cavallerias." This passage is exceedingly sublime. Wonderful was the zeal of the saint, as the "Acts of her Canonization" testify.

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so,—she desires to bear them. Extend, O Lord! Thy mighty arm: let not her life be spent on things so base: let Thy greatness appear in so low and feminine a creature, that men, seeing she can do nothing of herself, may praise *Thee*, cost what it may. This is what she desires, and she would give a thousand lives (if she had so many), that so by her means one soul might praise Thee a little more; and she would consider them all as very well bestowed, knowing perfectly well that she does not deserve to suffer the least cross for Thee, and how much *less* death! I know not, sisters, why I have spoken thus; I do not understand myself. You must know that these are the effects which remain after such suspensions; and they admit no doubt whatever, for they are not desires which pass away, but they are fixed and constant; and when any opportunity offers itself of discovering them, she sees that they were not feigned. But why do I say they are "fixed?" Sometimes, even in mean and trifling things, the soul feels she is cowardly, and so timorous, that it seems impossible for her to have courage for anything whatever.

I believe that our Lord, then, leaves her in her natural state for her own greater good, for at that time she understands that if ever she had courage for anything, His Majesty gave it to her; and this truth she sees with such great clearness, as leaves her annihilated, and more experienced in the mercy and greatness of our Lord, who is pleased to manifest them in so vile a creature. But most generally she is in the state I spoke of before.

One thing observe, sisters, in these ardent desires of seeing God, viz. that sometimes being so oppressive they must not be increased, but, if possible, directed in some other way. I say, "if possible," because in *some* cases, of which I shall speak hereafter, this would be quite impossible, as you will see. In these first it may sometimes be done, because the reason

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is so entire as to conform itself to the will of God, and say what St. Martin did: if the desires press us much, the thought may be turned to something else, because as they are the desires of persons who are very far advanced, the devil may well excite them to make us believe we are of that number; hence it is always good to walk in fear.

For my part, I consider that the devil cannot counterfeit the quiet and peace which this pain produces in the soul; rather will some passion be excited, like that by which we are disturbed in worldly matters. But he who has no experience, either in one or the other, will never understand this matter; for, thinking it something very great, he will increase the desires all he can, and thus injure his health very seriously; for this pain is continual,—at least very frequent.

Observe, likewise, that a weak constitution usually causes some of these troubles, especially if the persons be of a tender nature, and grieve about every trifle, which makes them a thousand times inclined to think that they are weeping for God, though it be not the case. It may also happen that a person, from hearing the least word, or from thinking upon God, may shed abundance of tears, and not be able to resist them, because there is some humour at the heart* which tends more to produce this effect, than the love which she has for God; and it seems she cannot stop weeping. Such persons having heard that tears are good, do not suppress them; they wish for nothing else, and therefore they increase them all they can. The object of the denial herein is, that they may weaken themselves in such a way, that afterwards they may be unable either to make use of prayer, or observe their rule.

Methinks that you are wondering, as if you wish to ask me, "What, then, are you to do, if I consider

* "Algun humor al corazon."

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there is danger in everything, since, though tears are good, there may be a delusion in them?" Perhaps I am myself deluded in this respect; but, believe me, I speak not without reason, for I have seen this delusion happen to some persons, though not to *me*, for I am not at all tender; rather, I have a heart so hard, that it sometimes gives me pain; yet when the fire within is great—however hard the heart may be, —it drops like an alembic.* We may easily discover if the tears proceed hence, for they are more strengthening and pacific than turbulent, and very seldom they do us any harm. The good which comes from this delusion (when it is such) is this, —that it injures the body, not the soul, if there be humility; if there be not humility, it will be no harm to entertain this suspicion. Let us not suppose that all consists in weeping much, but rather in *working* and practising virtues, for these are what we ought to value most; let tears come when God sends them, without our endeavouring to cause them. The tears which God sends will leave this dry ground watered, and are a greater help for procuring fruit, though we may esteem them but little, because *this* is the water which descends from heaven. But what we draw up by the strength of our arm is not to be compared to this, since we may often dig and weary ourselves, and not meet with a small pool of water, and how much less then with a fine spring! I consider it best, then, sisters, that we should place ourselves in the presence of our Lord, and consider His mercy and greatness, together with our own baseness; and let Him afterwards give us what He pleases, — either water or aridity; He knows much better than we do what is proper for us; by this means we shall enjoy rest and quiet, and the devil will have no opportunity of playing tricks upon us.

Among these sweet yet painful favours, our Lord

* "Distila como una alquitára."

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also gives sometimes certain transports,* and a strange kind of prayer which she does not understand. But I mention it here, in order that you may praise Him exceedingly (should He be pleased to grant you this favour), and that you may know it is something which really happens. It is, in my opinion, a close union of the powers, though our Lord here leaves them with their liberty, in order that they may possess this joy; and the same also happens to the senses, without their knowing what they enjoy, nor *how* they enjoy it. This may seem something very odd and strange, but the thing certainly happens. It is a joy of the soul so excessive, that she does not wish to possess it alone herself, but to tell it to all men, that so they may help her to praise our Lord, for this is the object and end of all her movements. O! what festivals would she keep, and what signs would she show, if she could, that all might know her joy! She seems to have found herself, and therefore, with the father of the prodigal son, she wishes to invite every one to behold her in her present state, for then she has no doubt of her being in security. I am persuaded she has reasons for this security, for it is impossible the devil should cause such great joy in the very interior of the soul, together with such a peace; hence her whole delight is to excite all others to praise God. It is very painful to her that, being possessed with such a transport of joy, she can be silent, and can dissemble. This it was, no doubt, which St. Francis felt when some robbers met him, as he was crying out in the fields, and he told them that he was the herald of the Great King. Other saints, also, went into the desert, that, like St. Francis, they might proclaim the praises of their God. I knew one who did this, viz. St. Peter of Alcantara (whom I consider to be a saint on account of his life); yet those who heard him some-

* "Unos jubilos y oracion estraña," &c.

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times thought he was *a fool*. O happy foolishness, sisters, should God give it to us all! What a favour has He bestowed upon you to confine you to a place where, though He should bestow this upon you, and give you proofs of it, it would rather help you than be an occasion of your meeting with reproach, as it would certainly do if we lived in the world, where men are so little accustomed to hear the praises of God published, that no wonder they notice such a thing.

O wretched times, and miserable life we now live in! Happy those souls whose lot has been so fortunate, as to be free from these dangers! It is sometimes a particular pleasure to me when, as these sisters stand before me, I see they have such inward joy, that they give to the very best of their power the greatest praises to our Lord, for their living in a monastery; and it is very evident that these proceed from the interior of the soul. This, sisters, I wish you often to do, for one who begins excites the rest. Upon what can your tongues be better employed, when you are together, than the praises of God, since we are so much obliged thereto?

May His Majesty vouchsafe often to grant us this kind of prayer, since it is so secure and profitable. We cannot acquire it by our own strength, because it is so exceedingly supernatural; and sometimes it continues a whole day, at which time the soul is like one who has drunk too much, yet not so much as to lose her senses, or to be like one who is melancholy, that has not quite lost his reason, but who does not forget what has been impressed on his imagination, nor can any one make him forget. These are very rude comparisons wherewith to illustrate so precious a subject, but my understanding cannot discover any better. The case then is this. This joy makes the soul so unmindful of herself and all things else, that she pays no regard to anything else; nor can she speak of anything else, except what proceeds from this her

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joy, viz. the praises of God. Let us help this soul, my daughters; why do we desire to have more understanding? What can give us greater pleasure? May all creatures assist us herein, for ever and ever. Amen, Amen, Amen.

CHAPTER VII.

SHE SPEAKS OF A KIND OF GRIEF WHICH SOULS FEEL FOR THEIR SINS, ON WHOM GOD BESTOWS THE FAVOURS MENTIONED IN THE PRECEDING CHAPTER, ETC.

You may think perhaps, sisters, that those souls to whom our Lord so especially communicates Himself will, on that account, be so secure of their enjoying Him for ever, as never to fear or bewail their former sins; and those particularly may think so, who have not obtained these favours; for if they have ever had them, and they came from God, they will understand what I say. But this is a great mistake, since the sorrow for sin increases still *more*, as more is received from God. For my part I believe, that, till we arrive where nothing can disturb us, this sorrow will never leave us. True, it afflicts us more at one time than another, and likewise in a different manner. Such a soul does not remember the punishment she deserves for them, but how very ungrateful she has been to One to whom she owes so much, and who so greatly deserves to be served, since by these sublime favours which He communicates to her, she discovers so much the better the greatness of God. She is astonished at her boldness: she laments her disrespect, and her conduct seems so foolish, that she never ceases to lament it, when she remembers how for such base things she deserted so great a Majesty. She reflects much more on this than on the favours she receives, which being so great (as I have already mentioned, and shall have to mention respecting

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others which are to come), seem to be carried away by a swift stream, and removed at their time. The stream of her sins always appears like mud, and remains in her memory, and a very heavy cross it is.

I know a person who, independent of her desire to die that she might see God, wished for death in order that she might not so frequently feel the torment she suffered—from considering her base ingratitude to Him, to whom she was, and ever would be, so indebted. Hence she thought no one's faults could equal hers, because she knew there was none whom God had so patiently endured, and upon whom He had conferred so many favours.

As to hell, they have no fear of it; but the fear of losing God sometimes troubles them exceedingly: this, however, is very seldom. All their fear is, lest God should forsake them, and take His hand away from them, and thus allow them to offend Him; they are also afraid lest they fall into a state as miserable as they were ever in; for they take little care either about their own pain or glory; and if they desire not to remain long in purgatory, it is rather because they wish not to be absent from God during the time they remain there, than for the torments they are to endure. I do not consider it safe for a soul, however much she may be favoured by God, to forget how she was sometimes in a miserable state, because though this be a painful thought, yet in many respects it is of great advantage. Because I have been so wicked, this perhaps is the reason why it appears so to me, and why I have the remembrance always in my mind. Those who have been good will have nothing to lament over, though there are always imperfections while we live in this mortal body. The pain is not relieved at all by considering that our Lord has already pardoned our sins, and forgotten them; it is even increased, by beholding such goodness and mercy bestowed upon one who deserved nothing but *hell.*

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I think that this must have been the great martyrdom which St. Peter and St. Mary Magdalen endured; for as they possessed so intense a love, and had received so many favours, and knew the greatness and majesty of God, so the remembrance of their sins must indeed have been a very great affliction to them, and they must have felt it very tenderly.

You may likewise imagine, that one who enjoys such high favours need not meditate on the mysteries of the most Sacred Humanity of Christ our Lord, because she is already wholly employed and exercised in love. On this point I have written elsewhere at some length. And though I have met with opposition, and have been told that I did not understand the subject, because there are many ways by which our Lord conducts souls, and that after the "beginnings" have been passed, it is best to exercise one's self in matters relating to the Divinity, and to avoid corporeal subjects; yet they cannot make me acknowledge that this is a safe way. It may be I am mistaken, or that we all mean the same thing. But I saw that the devil thereby wished to deceive me; and I have suffered so much from his deceits, that I think it best here to repeat the same again to you, though I have often said it before:—"Great caution and care are necessary." See, that for what I venture to tell you, you do not believe those who speak differently.

I will endeavour to explain my meaning better than I have elsewhere, because if perhaps any one should have written on the subject, as I have been told, and should have entered at some length into it, he may have spoken well. But to speak on the matter in general terms to *us*, who do not understand much, may do great harm.

Some souls may also think that they cannot meditate on the Passion, and much less on the Blessed Virgin, or on the lives of the Saints, from the re-

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membrance of whom we derive such great benefit and comfort. I cannot understand what they meditate upon, if thus they abstract themselves from everything corporeal; for, to be always on fire with love belongs to angelic spirits, not to *us* who live in a mortal body, and who must of necessity discourse, think of, and associate with those who, having the same bodies, &c., did such heroic actions for God: how much less should we intentionally separate ourselves from our only good, and our only remedy, viz. the most Sacred Humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ? I cannot believe they do so; but rather, I think they do not understand themselves; and so they will injure both themselves and others. At least I can assure them, they will not enter these two last Mansions; for if they lose the guide, viz. our good Jesus, they will not find the right way there: it is sufficient, if they have already arrived safely at the other Mansions. Our Lord Himself says, "I am the Way and the Light," and that none can come to the Father except by Him, and that whoever seeth Him seeth His Father. It will be said, "these words have another meaning." I do not understand this meaning, except that which my soul always feels to be the truth; and with this I have hitherto gone on very well.

There are some souls, (and many of them have spoken with me on the subject) whom our Lord having raised to perfect contemplation, they desire always to remain there: but this cannot be. By the goodness of our Lord, however, they are affected in such a manner, that they cannot afterwards meditate on the mysteries of the Passion and Life of Christ, as they used once to do. I know not the reason of this: but it happens very commonly, that the understanding is then quite indisposed for meditation. I believe the reason is this: that as in meditation God is entirely sought after, so when He is once found, and the soul is accustomed to seek Him again by the

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operation of the will, she is unwilling to trouble herself by making use of the understanding. It also seems to me, that the will being already enkindled, this noble faculty does not wish to make use of the other if it could; and it acts not amiss: but this will be impossible, especially till she has arrived at the two last Mansions. It is also loss of time, because in order that the will may be able to inflame the soul, it often stands in need of being helped by the understanding.

Observe this point, sisters, for it is very important, and therefore I will explain it a little more. The soul still desires to be wholly employed in love, and would wish to attend to nothing else; but she cannot though she would, because, though the will be not dead, yet the fire which used to inflame her is so extinct, that it is necessary for some one to blow it, in order that it may diffuse its heat. Would it be proper that the soul, being in this aridity, should stand expecting fire from heaven to consume this sacrifice which she makes of herself to God, as our holy father Elias did? Certainly *not*. It is not proper for us to expect miracles. Our Lord performs them (as I have already said, and shall mention further) for the sake of this soul when He pleases. But His Majesty wishes us to consider ourselves so wicked that we do not deserve He should perform them, and in the mean time that we should help ourselves as much as possible. For my part, I believe that, however elevated our prayer may be, this is necessary till we die.

It is indeed true, that he whom our Lord admits into the Seventh Mansion very seldom or ever stands in need of this diligence, for reasons which I shall mention there, if I remember to do so. But it is very common for her not to be absent from Christ our Lord, for she walks with Him in a wonderful manner, by which the Divinity and Humanity are together (her) constant company. Hence, when the

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fire I spoke of before is not enkindled in the will, nor the presence of God perceived, it is necessary we should seek for it; for this it is which His Majesty desires, as the Spouse did in the Canticles, and that we ask created things, "Who made you?" as St. Austin did. I find *he* did so in his "Meditations, or Confessions." We must not stand like sheep, spending our time in waiting. That which was once given to us, perhaps at first our Lord may not bestow again in a year, and not even during many years: His Majesty knows the reason; *we* should not desire to know it, nor have we any reason to desire it. Since we understand by what way we can please God, viz. by the way of His commandments and counsels, let us be very careful in observing them, and in meditating on His life and death, and remember how much we are indebted to Him: let the rest come when our Lord shall please.

But they reply, "they cannot dwell upon these subjects:" on account of what I have mentioned, they have perhaps some reason for saying so. Now you already know that it is one thing to discourse with the understanding, and another for the memory to represent a thing to the understanding. You will say, perhaps, "you do not understand me." This may, indeed, arise from my inability to express myself properly; but I will do what I can. I call that "meditation," when we discourse with the understanding in this way.

Suppose we begin to think on the favour God bestowed upon us in giving us His only Son; and we stop not here, but pass on to the mysteries of His glorious life; or let us begin with His prayer in the garden; the understanding stays not till it considers Him fixed on the cross. Again; we may take some point of Passion to meditate on, as, for instance, His "apprehension," and we proceed in this mystery to consider at length the things which are to be observed,—such as the treachery of Judas, the

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flight of the apostles, together with other things which followed: this is an admirable and very meritorious kind of prayer.

This is what (as I remarked) those souls may have reason to say, whom God has raised to supernatural things, and to perfect contemplation, "that they cannot make use of this kind of prayer:" *why* (as I said) I know not, nor do I know the cause of it; but in general they cannot make use of it. Yet none have reason to say, "they cannot dwell upon these mysteries, nor often present them to their understanding," especially since the Catholic Church celebrates them. But it is impossible that a soul which has received so much from God, should lose the remembrance of such precious proofs of love, since they are so many live sparks which will inflame the more that love which she has for our Lord: it is impossible also for her not to understand them.

The soul understands these mysteries in a more perfect way; for the understanding represents them to her, and they become so fixed in her memory, that merely beholding our Lord prostrate on the ground, in that dreadful sweat, is sufficient to occupy her, not for *one* hour only, but for many days. Considering with a simple view who He is, and how ungrateful we have been for such great sufferings, the will immediately comes in, though not with (a sensible) tenderness, to desire to serve Him in something for such wonderful kindness, and to suffer something likewise for One who endured so much for us, with other such-like desires, wherein the memory and understanding are occupied. This I believe is the reason why she can proceed no further in discoursing on the Passion; and this likewise makes her think she cannot meditate upon it. If she do not this, it is proper she should endeavour to do it, because I know that even very sublime prayer will not prevent her; and I consider it is not good unless we are often exercised in this kind of medita-

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tion. If on this account our Lord should favour her with suspensions, well and good, because though she be unwilling, He will make her leave what she is thinking about. I consider it certain that this method of proceeding is no impediment, but a great help to all that is good: but this it would not be, should she weary herself much in discoursing, as I said at first: I consider, likewise, that one who has arrived further cannot do it. Possibly it may be otherwise, because God leads by several ways; but let not those be blamed who cannot go along this way, nor let them be judged unfit to possess such rich treasures as those are, which are contained in the mysteries of Jesus Christ our good; nor shall any one, however spiritual he may be, persuade me that he does right who sometimes does not meditate upon them.

There are certain principles, and likewise means, which some souls make use of, who, beginning to arrive at the Prayer of Quiet, and to relish the sweets and delights which our Lord gives them, esteem it a great thing to be continually pleasing themselves therein. Now let them believe me, and not be absorbed so much (as I have said elsewhere), for life is long, and in it are many troubles; and hence, in order to bear them with perfection, we must consider how our pattern Jesus Christ, and how His apostles and saints bore them. The presence of our good Jesus, and that of His most Holy Mother, is very good company—we must not leave them. He is exceedingly pleased when we are affected with His sufferings, though we sometimes lose thereby our own pleasure and delight. Much more is He pleased, because the delight found in prayer is not so frequent but that we may have time for everything. If it be said that the soul continues in the same state, I should suspect this assertion—I speak of one who cannot do what I mentioned before;—and do you likewise suspect it, and endeavour to be free from

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this deceit, and with all your strength endeavour to keep yourselves from having delights; if this be of no use, inform the superioress of the matter, that she may appoint you an office of such care and responsibility as may free you from this danger; for it is very offensive—at least to the mind—that it should continue long.

I believe I have now shown how proper it is (however spiritual the individuals may be), not so much to shun corporeal things, as to think that even the most sacred humanity of Christ might be injurious to them.* They allege what our Lord said to his disciples, that "it was expedient He should go." This I cannot allow. Certainly He did not say so to his Blessed Mother, for she was strong in faith, because she knew He was both God and man; and though she loved Him more than the disciples, yet it was with such great perfection, that His presence rather increased it. The apostles, then, [it is said by these people,†] must not have been so firm in the faith as they were afterwards, and as we now have reason to be.

I tell you, daughters, I consider it to be a dangerous way, for hereby the devil may be able to make us lose all our devotion to the most blessed Sacrament. The delusion in which I once seemed to have been entangled did not proceed so far as this, but only I did not feel any pleasure in meditating so much on our Lord Jesus Christ; I rather wished to remain in this inebriation, and to await the delights thereof. I clearly saw, however, that I was going wrong; for, since I could not always have this delight, my thoughts went roving here and there, and my soul was like a bird flying up and down, and finding

* "Je crois avoir assez fait connaître combien il importe .... de ne se pas éloigner tellement de tous les objets corporels, que l'on s'imagine n'en devoir pas même excepter la très-sainte Humanité de notre Seigneur."—D'Andilly.

† These words I have added.

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no place in which to rest. Thus I was losing a great deal of time, without advancing in virtue, or gaining in prayer; and I knew not the cause, nor, in my opinion, should I ever have known it, because it seemed to me a very right way, till, having spoken about my prayer to a great servant of God, he gave me some advice concerning it. I afterwards clearly perceived how much I was mistaken, and I never give over lamenting that there ever was a time, wherein I did not understand that it is hard to gain with such great loss; and though I could easily, yet I would not, desire any good, unless it were obtained by means of Him from whom all good things descend. May He be blessed for ever. Amen.

CHAPTER VIII.

SHE SHOWS HOW GOD COMMUNICATES HIMSELF TO THE SOUL BY AN INTELLECTUAL VISION, ETC.

In order that you may be convinced, sisters, that what I have said is the truth, and that, in proportion as a soul advances further, she is admitted more into the company of her good Jesus, it will be proper to show that we cannot avoid being always with His Majesty, when he is pleased we should. This we shall clearly see, by the ways and methods whereby His Majesty communicates Himself to us, and discovers to us the love He has for us, by certain apparitions and visions so very wonderful, that I will mention them here, in order that you may not be afraid whenever our Lord is pleased to bestow any such favours upon you. May our Lord enable me to do this properly, in order that we may praise Him even though they should *not* be bestowed upon us, for being thus pleased to communicate Himself to a creature—He who is so great a Majesty.

Hence it is, that when the soul is not thinking of

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receiving such a favour, nor imagines that she ever merited it, she perceives our Lord Jesus Christ to be near her, though she sees Him not with the eyes of the body, nor with those of the soul. This is called an "intellectual vision," for what reason I know not. I know a person on whom God has conferred this favour, together with others which I shall mention hereafter. This person was at first exceedingly afflicted, because she could not understand what it was. She saw nothing, and yet she knew for certain that it was Christ our Lord who in that manner discovered Himself, neither could she doubt of his presence. Still she was in fear, and doubted whether the vision came from God, or no, though it brought along with it wonderful effects, thus proving that it came from God. She never heard of an "intellectual vision," nor did she think there was any such; but she clearly understood that it was our Lord who often spoke to her in the manner mentioned above; for, until He bestowed this favour upon her, she never knew who spoke to her, though she heard words.

Being terrified about this vision (for it is not like "imaginary" ones, which pass away immediately; but this continues for many days, and sometimes even more than a year), I know that she went to her confessor in very great sorrow.

He asked how she knew it was our Lord, since she saw nothing? He also requested her to inform him, what kind of countenance He had? She answered, that she knew not, because she did not see any countenance, nor could she tell anything but what she said, though she knew well it was He who spoke to her, and that it was not the effect of fancy. And though many fears were raised in her, yet often she could not doubt of His presence, especially when He said to her, "Fear not, it is I."* These words had such powerful effects, that she could have no

* The saint quotes these words in her "Life."

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doubts then, but rather she was greatly encouraged and cheered by such good company, which she found to be very useful to her towards enabling her to have God continually in her remembrance, and to be very careful not to do anything displeasing to Him, for she seemed always to be beholding Him. Every time she desired to speak with His Majesty, *in* prayer or out of prayer, she thought He was so near that He could not help hearing her, though to hear Him speak was not granted *when* she pleased, but on a sudden, when there was need. She saw Him on her right hand, but not with those senses by which we discover a person standing near us, for this happens in a more subtle manner,* which cannot be expressed, but it is as certain, and even more so (than by the senses). By these there may be a delusion, but in this way there is none, because it is attended with immense gain and interior effects, which would not be, were melancholy the cause; much less could the devil effect so much good, nor would the soul enjoy such great peace, or such continual desires of pleasing God, or such contempt for whatever does not conduce to unite us with Him. She afterwards clearly understood that it did not proceed from the devil, for by degrees our Lord discovered Himself more to her. I know, however, that sometimes she was exceedingly fearful, and at other times greatly confounded, not knowing whence so great a good could come to her. She and I were so much one and the same person, that nothing passed in her soul with which I was not acquainted, so that I can be good witness, and you may believe me that whatever I shall say on this subject is true.

This is a favour of our Lord, which brings with it great confusion of oneself and great humility; but, were it from the devil, the effect would be quite the opposite. Since, then, it clearly proves itself to be

* "Por otra via mas delicada que no se sabe dezir."

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given by God (for no human industry is able to obtain such feelings); whoever receives it can in no way whatever imagine that it is a favour of his own,* but that it comes from the hand of God; and although, in my opinion, some of the above-mentioned favours be greater, yet this brings a particular knowledge of God along with it; and, from holding this continual converse, there arises a most tender love for His Majesty, and certain desires — greater than those already mentioned — of giving ourselves entirely to His service, and also a great purity of conscience, because the presence of this Lord, who is so near her, makes her attentive to everything. And though we know God sees and is present at everything we do; yet such is our nature, that we neglect to reflect upon this truth; but this cannot happen here, for the Lord who stands so near excites us and keeps us attentive. This presence likewise disposes us for receiving the above-mentioned favours, because, as the soul is almost continually in actual love towards *Him* whom she sees and understands to be near her, those favours become much more frequent.

In a word, the gain which the soul receives, lets her see what a very great favour it is, and how highly it ought to be valued, and how much we should thank our Lord, who bestows it upon us without our being able to merit it; for no earthly treasure or delight can it be exchanged. Hence, when our Lord is pleased to take it away from her, she is in great affliction; and all possible diligence on our part, in order to regain that intercourse, is of little avail, for our Lord bestows it when he pleases, — it cannot be acquired. Sometimes, also, it is the company of some saint, and this likewise is very profitable.

You will ask, "If nothing be seen, how do we know whether the vision be Christ, or some saint, or His glorious Mother?" This the soul is unable to ex-

* "Es bien suyo, sino dado de la mano de Dios."

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press, or to conceive how she understands it; still she knows it with the greatest certainty. When our Lord speaks, it seems more easy; but a saint who does not speak—(and who only appears to be placed there by our Lord for the company and assistance of this soul)—causes more wonder. There are also other spiritual things which cannot be expressed; but by them is discovered how base our nature is, that so we may understand the greatness of God, since we are not capable of understanding the other things. Whoever, then, shall receive them, let him with admiration, hasten to praise His Majesty, and give to Him particular thanks for them; for, as these are favours not granted to all, he ought to prize them highly, and endeavour to serve God the more, who helps him in so many ways.

Hence it is that such a soul does not think any better of herself, but rather that she serves God *the least* among all who are on the earth, because she considers herself to be more obliged to serve Him; and any imperfection she falls into pierces her very bowels, and this too with reason.

Any one of you whom our Lord shall conduct in this way, may easily observe these effects which remain in the soul, so that you may understand it is no delusion or fancy; for (as I have before said) I consider it impossible that the vision, were it the effect of fancy, or the delusion of the devil, should continue so long, or benefit the soul in so remarkable a manner, and cause her to enjoy such interior peace. This is not the custom of the devil, for being so bad, he cannot (if he wished) produce such great good, since fumes of self-esteem would immediately follow, and a conceit of being better than other people. But the soul being thus continually in the presence of God, and having her attention so employed upon Him, would disgust the fiend so much, that, though he might sometimes tempt her, he would not do so *often*. And God is so faithful,

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that He will not permit him to have such power over a soul, that has no other object but that of pleasing His Majesty, and of laying down her life for His honour and glory: He will soon so order things, that she will be undeceived.

My conviction is, and will be, that if the soul proceed in the manner mentioned before, though these favours of our Lord may cease, His Majesty will not let her lose; though He may sometimes permit the devil to attack her, yet he will always go away confounded. If, then, daughters, any of you should be led this way, be not dismayed; still it is good to fear; let us use more circumspection, and be less confident, lest by being so highly favoured you might grow more negligent; this would be a sign that such favours did not come from God, if you did not find the effects which I have mentioned before.

It is good to mention this in the beginning to some very learned person, under the seal of confession, since such are the individuals who can enlighten us; or, if it can be done, to a very spiritual person; if not, a learned person is better:—but the best of all, if there be an opportunity, to both the one and the other. Should they tell you it is your fancy, be not troubled at it, for fancy can neither injure nor benefit your soul much; recommend yourself to the Divine Majesty, who will not allow you to be deceived. If they tell you it comes from the devil, the trouble will be greater, though a good scholar will not tell you so, should there be the effects mentioned above. But, even though he should tell you so, I know that this same Lord who walks with you will console and protect you, and enlighten him to instruct you. I advise you to make choice of one who is very learned; and, if you can, of one who is also spiritual. If he be one who, though addicted to the exercise of prayer, is not conducted by our Lord along this way, he will immediately

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wonder and condemn it. Let the prioress, then, be asked to give you leave to consult a learned person, because, though the soul be secure by seeing the good life she leads, yet the prioress is obliged to let her mention the matter to another, in order that both may go on in security. When she has spoken with these persons, let her be quiet, and trouble herself no more about the matter; for sometimes, without any grounds for fear, the devil suggests such immoderate scruples, that the soul is not satisfied with having spoken *once* with these persons, especially if the confessor have little experience, and seems timorous, and he too should command her to mention it. Thus that is published which ought to be kept very secret, and then this soul comes to be persecuted and tormented; for what she thinks is secret she sees is public; hence arise many troubles for her, and these may likewise fall upon the "Order," considering what times we live in.

Thus great caution is required herein, and I strongly recommend it to the prioresses; let them not suppose that a sister who has such favours, is better than the others. Our Lord guides every one as He sees necessary. If she make good use of these, they will prepare and dispose her for becoming a great servant of God; but sometimes God leads the weakest this way, and so there is nothing herein to approve or condemn; we must look to virtues only, and esteem her the most who serves our Lord with the greatest mortification, humility, and purity of conscience, since she is the most holy, although we can know little for certain here below, until the true Judge shall reward every one according to his merits. Then we shall wonder at seeing, how different *His* judgment is from what we are able to understand here below. May he be praised for ever. Amen.

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CHAPTER IX.

SHE EXPLAINS HOW OUR LORD COMMUNICATES HIMSELF TO A SOUL BY AN "IMAGINARY VISION," ETC.

We now come to "imaginary visions," in which it is said the devil can more easily enter than in the preceding ones; and so it is the case. But when they come from our Lord, they seem to me to be in some manner more profitable than others, because they are more conformable to our nature, with the exception, however, of those which our Lord discovers and makes known in the last mansion, for none of the other visions can equal these.

Let us then consider now (as I told you in the preceding chapter)—in what manner this Lord is here present. It is as if we had a jewel of great value and virtue in a casket of gold; we know for certain it is there, though we may never have seen it; and its virtues fail not to benefit us, if we carry it about with us, since we find by experience it has cured us of certain infirmities, for which it is suitable. But we dare not look upon it, nor open the casket; neither could we do so, for He only knows how to open it to whom the jewel belongs: and though He lends it to us, to make use of it for our benefit, yet He keeps the key Himself; and when He is pleased to show it to us, He will open it for us, as it belongs to Him; and then when He thinks proper He will close it again, as He does in reality.

Let us suppose, then, that sometimes He is pleased unexpectedly to show it to him to whom He has lent it, in order to do him good; it is evident that he will afterwards feel far greater pleasure, when he remembers the wonderful brightness of the stone, which thus becomes more deeply engraven on his memory. And so it is here, when our Lord is pleased to caress this soul more lovingly. He clearly shows her His

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most Sacred Humanity in the way He pleases, either as He appeared when He was in the world, or as He was after His resurrection; and though this vision is effected with a quickness which resembles that of a flash of lightning; yet this glorious image remains so fixed in the imagination, that I consider it impossible ever to blot it out, till she behold it there, where she shall possess it for ever. Though I call it an *image*, yet we must not have an idea that it seems as if it were *painted* in the eyes of the beholder: rather is it most truly endowed with life. Sometimes He discourses with the soul, and reveals great secrets to her.

But you must understand, that though the soul gazes upon it for some time, it can no more be seen than the sun; and hence this vision always passes away very quickly; not because its splendour, like that of the sun, dazzles the interior sight which beholds all this—(when it is with the exterior view I can say nothing of it, because the person of whom, as I said, I can speak so particularly, never had any experience of it; and what one has *not* experienced, he cannot give any correct account of); for its lustre is, as it were, a transfused light, and like that of the sun, covered with something as beautiful and as bright as a diamond, if it could be made so. His garment seems like the finest holland; and almost every time that God bestows this favour, she remains in an ecstasy, her baseness and unworthiness not being able to bear so terrible a sight. I call it "terrible," because, though it be the most beautiful and delightful that can be imagined, should one live even a thousand years, and dwell upon it even to weariness, because it far exceeds the capacity of our imagination or understanding; yet this presence of so great a Majesty causes such great fear in the soul, that there is no need of her asking, nor of any one telling her who it is; for He clearly makes Himself known to be the Lord of heaven and earth. But

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this earthly kings cannot do; for of themselves, they would be little esteemed, but for the royal pomp which attends them, or because others announce who they are.

O Lord! how little do we Christians know Thee! What shall we do in that day when Thou wilt come to judge us, if speaking so familiarly with Thy spouse and beholding Thee causes such terror! What will it be, daughters, when He shall with a dreadful voice say to the wicked, "Depart from me, ye cursed of my Father!"

Let then what I have said not be forgotten, respecting this favour bestowed by God upon any soul, for it will be of great benefit. St. Jerome, though so holy, did not allow it to depart from his memory; and thus, whatever we may suffer here in the rigour of a religious life, will seem nothing whatever to us. What do we wait for, since even should our sufferings last long, it is but a moment when compared with eternity.

I tell you sincerely, that though I am very wicked I did not fear the torments of hell, which were as nothing in comparison, when I considered that the "damned" must behold those eyes of our Lord,—so amiable, so meek, so gracious,—incensed against them: this I think my heart could not endure. How much *more* shall he fear Him to whom our Lord thus represents Himself, if the terror be such that it leaves one senseless? This is certainly the cause of the soul being in a rapture; and our Lord helps her weakness, that she may be united to His greatness in this sublime communication with God.

When the soul is able to continue long in beholding this Lord, I do not consider *that* a vision, but a certain vehement consideration formed in the imagination: it is a kind of *dead* image, in comparison with this other. It happens that some persons—(and I know this to be true, for not three or four, but

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many persons have spoken with me on the subject) are of so weak an imagination, that whatever they think upon, they say "they see it clearly," as it indeed seems to them: they have also so vigorous an understanding, or whatever else it may be, for I know not, that they become quite certain of everything in their imagination. But had they seen a true vision, they would, without having any doubt of it, clearly see the mistake; for they continue to frame within themselves that which they see, without afterwards finding any effects therefrom; but they are much colder than if they had seen a devout picture. It is very evident that no attention is to be paid to such a representation, and thus it is forgotten much sooner than a dream.

But in what we are speaking of, this is not the case; for when the soul is far from imagining that she is to see anything, and has not the least thought thereof, all at once the whole object is represented to her together; and this disturbs all the powers and senses with great terror, in order to place them afterwards in that blessed peace. And as when St. Paul was thrown to the earth, there came a tempest and noise from heaven; so it is in this interior world, a wonderful movement is made, and in an instant everything is calm; and the soul is so fully instructed in sublime truths, that she stands in need of no other master. True wisdom, without any labour on her part, has dispelled her ignorance, and the soul continues for some time in a great certainty, that this favour comes from God. However much people may tell her to the contrary, they cannot then make her fear any delusion: afterwards her confessor may terrify her, and God may seem to forsake her, so that she wavers a little (thinking it might possibly happen on account of her sins; but she does not believe it, except in the way of temptation against points of faith, as I have mentioned in other cases), and the devil may disturb her a little, but he cannot

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prevent the soul from continuing firm and constant in the faith; nay, the more he attacks her, the surer she is that the devil could not produce so many benefits as she in reality finds. Hence, he has not much power in the interior of the soul, though he can represent the object, but not with the like truth, majesty, or with the same effects. Confessors not being able to see this, and perhaps he who receives the favour from God being unable to express it, are afraid, and very justly so; one should therefore proceed with caution, and wait till he beholds the fruits which these visions produce; and by little and little he should observe the humility and strength of virtue which they leave in the soul; for if it be the devil, he will soon discover himself, and we shall find him uttering a thousand lies.

If the confessor be experienced, and have received these favours, he will not require a long time to discover the delusion, for he will quickly perceive by the relation whether the vision come from God, the imagination, or the devil, especially if His Majesty have given him the gift of "discerning spirits;" for if he have this united with learning, he will easily understand it, even though he should not have experience.

That which is very necessary, sisters, is to confer with your director, with great sincerity and simplicity: I do not mean in confessing your sins (for that is clear enough), but in giving him an account of your prayer. If you do not act thus, I cannot insure your going the right way; nor can I be certain that it is God who teaches you, since He is exceedingly desirous that you should, with the same truth and clearness, treat with His deputies, as you would with Himself, and that you should be anxious to acquaint him with all your thoughts, however trifling; and how much more, then, with your *actions?* If you act in this way, never trouble nor disquiet yourselves; for though the vision should *not* come from

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God, if you have humility and a good conscience, it will do you no harm, because His Majesty knows how to draw good out of evil, and is able to effect in the same way *that* by which the devil would wish to destroy you, and you will thus gain more by it. But while you are considering how lovingly our Lord bestows such great favours upon you, strive with more care to please Him, and to have your memory always occupied with His appearance. A great scholar once said, "that the devil is an excellent painter;"* adding, "that if he should show him our Saviour drawn to the life, he would not refuse to excite his devotion by it, and make war upon the devil with his own weapons; and though the painter might be very wicked, he would not on that account forbear to reverence the picture he drew, if it represented Him who is all our good." This learned man thought *that* was very bad advice which some persons gave, viz. upon seeing any vision of this kind, to make some outward sign of scorn,† for he said, "wherever we see the picture of our king, we ought to reverence it." I find he had reason for these words; for even among ourselves it would be considered an offence, if one who wished well to another knew that a person made use of the like signs of scorn to his image. How much *more*, then, is it proper always to show respect to a crucifix, wherever it may be seen, or to any other image of our Emperor?

Though I have spoken on this subject in another place, I am desirous of mentioning it here, because I have seen a person exceedingly afflicted when she was commanded to make use of this remedy. I know not who invented it, thus to torment one who was obliged to obey, if her confessor advised her, for she would consider herself ruined unless she did

* "Dezia un gran letrado, que el demonio es gran pintor."

† Somé of the saint's confessors told her to do this. (See her "Life:" *Dolman.*)

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so. My opinion is, that when you are thus advised, you give this reason with humility, and refuse the advice: those good reasons gave me great satisfaction which *he* gave me, who advised me how to act in this case.

One great advantage which the soul gains from this favour of our Lord is, that when she thinks upon Him, or on His life and passion, she remembers His most mild and beautiful countenance; this is a very great comfort; just as, in this world, we receive a greater pleasure from having seen a person who does us great good, than if we had never known him. I tell you, that so sweet a remembrance is very profitable to us; other benefits it brings along with it. But having spoken so much of the effects which these visions produce — of which more hereafter, — I will for the present say no more, without first earnestly advising you, that though you know God bestows these favours on some souls, you never pray to Him, nor desire Him to lead you this way; for though it may seem to you to be very good, and greatly to be esteemed, yet it is not fitting to be asked, for these reasons :—

First, because it is a want of humility to desire what you *never deserved;* hence I believe that he has little humility who desires it; for, as a common working man is far from desiring to be a king, considering such a thing impossible, because he does not deserve it; so is an humble person far from wishing such favours; and I am convinced they will never be bestowed, except on those who are humble; for, before our Lord bestows these favours, He gives us a true knowledge of ourselves. Ought we not truly to understand, that she has a very great favour shown her in not being cast into hell, who entertains such thoughts? Secondly, because such a person is very certain to be deceived, or in great danger of it, for the devil requires no

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more but to find one little door open, in order to lead us into a thousand deceits.

Thirdly, because when the desire is vehement, and the imagination strong, it makes one think he sees and hears that which he wishes for; just as it happens to those who, in the daytime, having a great desire for something, and thinking upon it very earnestly, dream of it in the night.

Fourthly, it is a very great presumption for you to desire to choose a way for yourselves, who know not what is best for you, since you should refer the matter to our Lord, who knows you the best, in order that He may conduct you in the way He likes best.

Fifthly, because the troubles are not few, as you may perhaps imagine, but very numerous, and of various kinds, which they endure, on whom our Lord bestows these favours; and how do you know whether you will be able to endure them?

Sixthly, because it may happen that you might lose by the very way in which you thought to gain, as it happened to Saul when he was made king.

In a word, sisters, besides these there are other reasons; and, believe me, the *surest* is to desire only the will of God; let us place ourselves in His hands, for He loves us exceedingly, and we cannot do wrong if with a determined will we persevere herein. You must know, also, that more glory is not merited by receiving many of these favours; rather, we are obliged to serve Him the more. Our Lord does not deprive us of that wherein more merit consists, since it is in our power; hence, there are many holy persons who never knew what it was to receive *one* of these favours; and others receive them, and yet are no saints.* Think not that these favours are bestowed constantly; rather, for once that our Lord

* "Ansi ay muchas personas santas, que jamas supieron que cosa es recebir una destas mercedes, y otras que las reciben, que no lo son," &c.

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gives them, many labours have to be endured; and thus an humble soul does not think how she may procure them frequently, but how to make a good use of them. It is true they are a great help towards acquiring virtues in a high degree; but *he* has much greater merit who obtains them, by having purchased them with his own labour.

I know three persons (one of whom was a man) on whom our Lord bestowed these favours; they were so desirous of serving His Majesty at their own cost, without these wonderful consolations, and so desirous of suffering also, that they complained to our Lord for having bestowed such favours upon them; and if they could, they would have refused them. I do not speak of the delights of these visions—(from which, in the end, come very great benefits, which ought to be highly prized), but of those delights which our Lord gives in contemplation! It is true these desires, in my opinion, are supernatural, and come from souls all on fire, who wish our Lord to see that they do not serve Him for wages; and thus they never consider they are to receive glory for anything which they do, (that thereby they may give themselves the more to His service); but they wish to satisfy their love, the property of which is always to be working in a thousand different ways. The soul in this state would fain invent means of consuming herself in Him; and, if it were necessary that she should remain for ever annihilated for the greater glory of God, she would willingly do so.

May *He* be praised for ever (Amen) who, in humbling Himself to converse with such miserable creatures, is pleased to manifest His greatness.

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CHAPTER X.

THE SAINT MENTIONS OTHER FAVOURS WHICH GOD BESTOWS UPON A SOUL, DIFFERENT FROM THOSE MENTIONED BEFORE.

In many ways does our Lord communicate Himself to the soul in these "apparitions;"—sometimes, when she is afflicted; at other times, when some trouble is to happen to her; and, again, when His Majesty wishes to delight Himself with her, and caress her. I need not enter into every particular, as my meaning is only to explain the different kinds which are found in this way, as far as I understand them; in order that you may know, sisters, what is their nature, and what effects they leave behind them; for we may be mistaken in supposing every fancy of ours to be a vision; and, also, that when it is in reality a vision, knowing such a thing is possible, you may not be troubled or afflicted. The devil gains much, and is exceedingly delighted to see a soul in trouble; because he knows it hinders her from employing herself wholly in loving and praising God.

In other ways, much more sublime, though less dangerous, because I believe the devil cannot counterfeit them, His Majesty communicates Himself. This is a difficult matter to speak about, because it is exceedingly deep; the "imaginary visions" are more easily explained. It happens, when our Lord is pleased, that the soul being in prayer, and in perfect enjoyment of her senses, is on a sudden seized with a suspension, in which our Lord reveals great secrets to her, which she thinks she sees in God Himself, for these are not visions of the Most Sacred Humanity. But though I say "she sees," yet she sees nothing, for it is no imaginary, but a very intellectual vision, in which is discovered how all things are seen in God, and how He contains them in Himself. This

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is of great benefit to us; for though it passes away in an instant, yet it is deeply engraven in the soul, producing great self-confusion, and discovering more clearly our malice in offending God, because we commit grievous offences by being in Him ourselves.

I will make use of a comparison, in order to make you understand this matter the better. Let us suppose God to be, as it were, a room, or a very large and magnificent palace, which contains all the world within it. Can a sinner possibly remove himself from this palace, in order to do his evil deeds? No! certainly not; thus even in God Himself are committed the abominations, dishonesties, and other immoralities which we sinners do. O! dreadful evil, worthy of the greatest consideration, and very profitable for us who understand little, and cannot comprehend these truths; for, if we did, it would be impossible for us to give way to so mad a boldness!

Let us consider, sisters, the great mercy and patience of God, in not plunging us into hell immediately: let us give Him our most grateful thanks, and let us be ashamed to be offended at anything that is done or said against us; for it is the greatest wickedness in the world to behold our Creator enduring so many injuries from his creatures, and that we should feel hurt at a word spoken in our absence, and that through no bad intention. O, the misery of the world! When, my daughters, shall we imitate in something this great God? Away, then, let us not think we do anything very wonderful, when we suffer injuries without murmuring; but let us willingly bear everything, and love those who injure us, since this Lord has not ceased to love us, though we displease Him exceedingly: He has therefore very great reason to require of us all to forgive, however much we may be injured. I tell you, daughters, though these visions pass away immediately, yet it is a great favour which our Lord bestows upon the soul, if she

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would only make a good use of it, seeing it is almost always present before her.

It happens, likewise, that God, very suddenly, and in a manner which cannot be expressed, discovers to us in Himself a certain truth, which seems to obscure all those which are in creatures, clearly manifesting that He alone is truth, which cannot deceive. Herein is fully comprehended what David says in the Psalm, "Every man is a liar"—words which never could be so understood, though we should often hear it said, that God is the Infallible Truth. I remember how Pilate asked our Lord in His passion, and said, "What is truth?" and how little we in this world understand this Supreme Truth. I would willingly enter into more particulars; but they cannot be expressed.

Let us conclude from this, sisters, in order to conform ourselves in something to our God and Spouse, it will help us much, if we endeavour always to walk in this truth. I say that we must not only take care not to lie (and herein, glory be to God, I see already that, in these houses, you take great care, on no account whatever to tell a lie), but that we walk in truth before God and men, in every possible way; especially in not desiring that men should think us better than we are. In all our looks, also, let us give to God what is His, and to ourselves what is ours, endeavouring from everything to draw truth: thus we shall pay little regard to this world, which is altogether a lie and a falsehood.

I was once considering the reason why our Lord loved humility so much, when, without much consideration, I suddenly remembered, that God was essentially the Supreme Truth, and humility is walking in the truth; for it is a very great truth, that of ourselves we have no good, but misery and nothingness; and *he* who does not understand this, walks in falsehood; but he who understands it the best, is the most pleasing to the Supreme Truth, because he walks

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in it.* May God grant us the favour, sisters, never to be without this knowledge of ourselves. Amen.

Our Lord bestows these favours on a soul, because, being His true spouse, and being now resolved to accomplish His will in everything, He is pleased to give her some knowledge of the means whereby she is to accomplish it, and of His greatness likewise. It is not necessary for me to say any more. These two I have mentioned, because they seem to me very profitable in teaching us, that in such cases there is no ground for fearing, but rather reason to praise our Lord for giving them; for, in my opinion, the devil and our own imagination have little access here; and hence the soul enjoys great pleasure and satisfaction.

CHAPTER XI.

SHE SPEAKS OF CERTAIN DESIRES WHICH GOD GIVES A SOUL OF ENJOYING HIM, AND WHICH ARE SO VEHEMENT AND IMPETUOUS THAT THEY ENDANGER HER LIFE.

WILL all these favours, which the Spouse has bestowed upon the soul, be sufficient to make the little dove or butterfly (for do not think I have forgotten it) to rest contented, and repose in some place where she is to die? No, certainly, she is rather much worse, and though she may have received these favours many years since, she mourns and weeps continually, for every one of those years increases her affliction. The reason is, that as she understands still more and more the greatness of her God, and sees herself so remote from Him, and so far from enjoying Him, her desire is increased the more; and so is her love too, when she discovers still more, how

* "Offrecídseme de presto sin considerarlo—que es, por ser Dios Suma Verdad, y la humilidad es—andar en verdad, que lo es muy grande no tener cosa buena de nosotros, sino miseria, y ser nada: y quien esto no entiende—anda en mentira," &c.

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much this great God and Lord deserves to be loved; and during these years this desire by degrees increases in such a way, as to cause that dreadful pain which I will now mention.

I said "years," with respect to what that person felt and experienced, of whom I spoke; and I know well that God is not to be limited, and that He is able, in a moment, to advance a soul to a much higher degree than is mentioned here. His Majesty is both able to do all that He pleases, and desirous of doing a great deal for us.

It happens, then, sometimes, that from these anxieties, tears, and groans, and the great impetuosities already mentioned, all this seems to proceed from our love, accompanied with great sensibility; but all is nothing in comparison with this other, of which I am now speaking; because this seems to be a fire which continues smoking, and may be endured, though with pain.

It happens, then, sometimes, that such a soul, thus burning in herself, upon a very slight thought that she may have, or through a word which she heard respecting the delay of her death, feels, on the other hand, a blow, as if it came from a fiery dart, though she understand not whence, nor how: I do not say, it *is* a "dart;" but whatever it is, it is evident it cannot come from our nature; neither is it a blow (though I mentioned the word*); but it wounds more sharply, and in my opinion, not in that part where we feel pain in this world, but in the very depth and inmost recess of the soul, where this ray, which passes away so quietly, reduces all it finds of this earth of our nature to dust; for, during the time it continues, it is impossible to remember anything of our being, because in an instant, it binds up the faculties in such a manner, that they have no liberty for anything whatever, except for those things which tend to increase this grief.

* "Viene de otra parte un golpe," &c.

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I do not wish this to be considered an exaggeration, for I indeed see I have said little, because it cannot be expressed. This is a rapture of the senses and faculties altogether, and does not tend to make this affliction felt, for the understanding is very quick in comprehending the reason there is to grieve, because the soul sees herself absent from God; and His Majesty helps this at that time by so clear a manifestation of Himself, as to increase the pain to such a degree, that the person who feels the pain breaks forth into loud cries; and though she be very patient and accustomed to suffer great pains, yet she cannot do otherwise, for this torment is not in the body, but in the interior of the soul.

Hence the person concludes, how much sharper its pains are than those of the body: and it is represented to her, that the sufferings of purgatory are similar to these, where the want of a body is no hinderance to the soul's suffering much more than all those men do who live in the body. I saw one in this state, and I certainly thought the person was dying; and no wonder, for one is indeed in great danger of death; and thus though it may not last long, yet it leaves the body all disjointed, and the pulse then beats so faint, as if one were about to die; and with reason, because the natural heat fails, and the supernatural so burns it up, that with a very little more, God would satisfy her desires of dying; not that one feels any bodily pains, though (as I said) the body is so disjointed that, for two or three days after, it has no strength even to write a few lines, for the pains are great; and, in my opinion, the body always continues weaker than before. Feeling no corporal pain, arises from the predominance of the interior sense of the soul; on this account she pays no regard to the body, even should it be torn in a thousand pieces.

You will say, "this is an imperfection; for why does she not conform herself to the will of God, to

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which she seems resigned?" Hitherto, she has not been able to do so, and thus has her life passed away. But it is not the case now, because her reason is such, as not to be able to govern itself, nor to think of anything but what torments her: as she is absent from her chief good, for what should she live? She seems to feel herself to be in a strange solitude; all those who live on earth are no company for her: no! nor would (I believe) those in heaven be, if her Beloved One were not there present; everything torments her, and she sees herself like one hanging in the air, neither able to rest on anything belonging to earth, nor able to ascend into heaven. She is burnt up with this thirst, and cannot obtain water; this thirst is unbearable, and so excessive, that no water can quench it; neither does she desire to have it quenched, except *that* of which our Saviour spoke to the Samaritan woman; but this is not given to her.

O! my God and my Lord! to what a state dost thou bring those who love Thee! But all is little in comparison with that which Thou givest to them afterwards; and very proper is it that it should cost them much, especially if it should contribute to purify such a soul for entering into the Seventh Mansion, just as those who are to enter heaven are purified in purgatory. The suffering is quite as trifling, as a drop of water in comparison with the sea; how much more proper, then, is it,* for notwithstanding this torment and affliction, greater than which, in my opinion, cannot be found on earth (for this person has endured many afflictions, and yet she considered them all as nothing in comparison with this), the soul perceives this pain is of such great value, that she clearly understands she could never merit it; but this perception does not come in such a way as to give any relief, though herewith she bears it very willingly, and would bear it all her life, if God so

* Some words seem to be omitted here, for the sense seems obscure without them.

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pleased, though she were not to die once, but to be always dying; for it is in reality nothing less.

Let us consider too, sisters, that those who are in hell have not this conformity, nor the joy and delight which God bestows upon the soul; they see their sufferings are unprofitable, and that they always suffer, and shall suffer more and more. I mean *more* as to accidental pains, because the torments of the soul are greater than those of the body, and those which they endure are beyond comparison greater than that which I have mentioned here; and these see, also, that their torments shall continue for ever. What will become of these miserable souls, and what ought we not to do and to suffer in this very short life, which is a mere nothing, in order to be delivered from such terrible and eternal torments? I tell you, it is impossible to express how great is the suffering of the soul, and how different from that of the body, unless a person has experienced it; and our Lord himself wishes us to understand this, in order that we may know the better how much we owe Him for having conducted us to a state of life, which we hope, in His mercy, will be the means of delivering us from those miseries; and may He pardon our sins also.

Let us now return to what we were speaking about when we left the soul in that extreme torment. In this extremity she does not continue long—at most, in my opinion, not above three or four hours; for were it to continue long, it would be impossible for human infirmity to bear it, except by a miracle. Sometimes it has not continued for more than a quarter of an hour, and yet the person has been as it were disjointed. It is true that this time it came upon her so violently, that she became quite senseless upon hearing only one word, "that her life would not yet end." She was then engaged in conversation, it being the last day of Easter; and during all the time she was in such aridity, that she scarcely knew

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it was Easter. To think of being able to resist it would be the same as if one, being thrown into a great fire, should wish to prevent the flames from burning him. It is not a pain which can be hidden; but those who are present understand the great danger a person is in, though they cannot be witnesses of the interior. It is true, that whilst people are with her they are some company for her, but only as if they were *shadows;* and such all earthly things seem to her. In order that you may see how possible it is (if this should ever happen to you) for the weakness of our nature to interpose here, it may be necessary to tell you, that sometimes it happens, when (as you have seen) the soul is dying through her desire of dying,* which desire so oppresses her, that hardly anything seems wanting to prevent her leaving the body; then she fears indeed, and wishes this pain to lessen, in order that she may not die. It is very clear that this pain arises from natural weakness, for on the other hand her former desires do not leave her; nor is it possible for this pain to be removed, till our Lord shall take it away. This is usually done by a vision, whereby the true comforter both comforts and strengthens the soul to be willing to live as long as His Majesty shall please.

This is a very painful thing; but it leaves in the soul very great effects, and expels the fear of troubles which may follow; for, in comparison with so acute a pain which the soul felt, all others seem to her as nothing. She is so improved thereby, that she would be glad to endure it often; but this she cannot in any way obtain, nor has she any means of recovering it again till our Lord shall please; nor can she resist it when it comes. She has a greater contempt of the world than she formerly had, for she sees that nothing in it helps her in this affliction. She is also much more disengaged from creatures, because she

* "Que muere por morir, quando aprieta tanto," &c.

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sees that only her Creator can comfort and satisfy her. She is likewise more careful and fearful not to displease God, because she sees He can console and torment whenever He pleases.

There are two things, it seems to me, in this spiritual way, which endanger a person's life. One is what we have already mentioned, and which is indeed very dangerous; the other is a very great joy and delight—so excessive, that it seems to make the soul faint away, so that she is very near dying; and truly this would be no small happiness for her.

Here, sisters, you will see whether I had reason to say, "Courage is necessary," and that our Lord, whenever you desire such things, may justly say to *you*, as He did to the sons of Zebedee, "Can you drink of this chalice?" I believe, sisters, we should all answer Yes, and justly so, because His Majesty gives strength to *him* for whom he sees it is necessary, and in everything He protects such souls, and answers for them in persecutions and slanders, as He did for Mary Magdalen, if not by words, at least by deeds. At last, before they die, He repays them all together, as you shall now see. May he be blessed for ever, and may all creatures praise Him. Amen.

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THE SEVENTH MANSIONS.

CHAPTER I.

SHE SPEAKS OF THE GREAT FAVOURS WHICH GOD BESTOWS ON SOULS, WHO HAVE ENTERED THE SEVENTH MANSIONS, ETC.

You may suppose, sisters, that as so much has already been said regarding this spiritual way, nothing more can be added. It would be a great mistake to think so; for as God's greatness has no limits, so neither have His works. Who is able to mention all His mercies and wonders? It is impossible: never wonder, then, at what *has* been said, or shall be said, because it is all a mere cipher in comparison with what may be said concerning God. He has been very merciful to us, in having communicated these things to a person,* by whom we might be able to know them. The more we are made aware that He communicates himself to creatures, the more shall we praise His greatness, and endeavour to have a high esteem of that soul in which our Lord takes such pleasure and delight; and such a soul each one of us has. But since we do not prize her, as a creature made after the image of God deserves to be, neither do we understand the great secrets which are concealed within her.

May His Majesty, if such be His pleasure, guide my pen, and bestow upon me the favour of enabling me to explain something of the many things which are to be mentioned, and which he discovers to those whom He conducts into this mansion. I have earnestly requested this favour from His Majesty, since He knows that my only object is not to let His mercies be hidden, that so His holy name may be praised the

* That is, to the Saint herself.

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more. I hope, sisters, He will grant me this favour, not for my sake, but for *yours*, in order that you may understand how important it is for your Spouse to celebrate this spiritual marriage with your souls, for it brings with it many good things, as you will see; it is also necessary you should put no obstacle in the way.

O Great God! I seem to tremble, being such a miserable creature, and having to speak on a subject which I am so far from deserving to understand. The truth is, I have been in great confusion, for I have been thinking whether it would be better to finish this "Mansion" in a few words, since I thought people would imagine that I knew by experience what I said. I am likewise extremely ashamed, because, knowing what I am, it is a terrible thing. On the other hand, it seemed to be a temptation and a weakness, though you may throw a thousand censures upon me; so that God is praised and known a little more, let all the world exclaim against me; and this the more, because perhaps I may be dead before this book is seen. May He be blessed who lives, and shall live for ever. Amen.

When our Lord is pleased to be moved by what this soul suffers, and *has* suffered through her desires for Him, which He has now spiritually chosen to be His spouse, He allows her to enter this His Seventh Mansion, before the consummation of the spiritual nuptials; for as He has a mansion in heaven, so He is to have an abode in the soul, in which His Majesty alone resides. Let us call it another heaven, since it is very important for us, sisters, not to imagine the soul to be something obscure; and, as we do not see it, we generally think there is no other interior light except what we see, and that there is in the soul a certain obscurity: I indeed grant this to you, as regards a soul which is not in the state of grace, not through want of the Sun of Justice which is in her, and gives her being, but because she is incapable of

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receiving its light, as I have mentioned in the "First Mansion."

Let us, sisters, take particular care to pray for those who are in mortal sin; it is a very great charity. If we saw a Christian with his hands bound behind him with a strong chain, and tied fast to a pillar, and dying with hunger, not through want of victuals, having every delicacy before him, but because he cannot reach it, and put it into his mouth, and that he was about to die, not a temporal, but an eternal death, would it not be a great cruelty to stand looking on, and not give him anything to eat? But what if, by your prayers, his chains also could be loosened? For the love of God, I beg of you always to remember such souls in your prayers. We do not, however, speak here of these souls, but of such only who have done penance for their sins, and, through God's mercy, are in a state of grace.

We may consider the soul, not as a limited creature, but as an internal world, containing so many and such beautiful mansions, as you have seen, and this with reason, since God has an abode within this soul. When His Majesty is pleased to bestow upon her the above-mentioned favour of this divine espousals, He first brings her into His own mansion; His Majesty does not wish this to be, as at other times, when He sends her raptures, and when, I believe, He unites her to himself, as well as in the Prayer of Union; but there it seems to the soul, that she is not called by God to enter into her centre, as is the case in this mansion, but into the superior part, though it matters little whether this be in one way or the other.*

Still what is the most necessary to notice is, that there our Lord unites her to Himself; but it is effected by making her become blind and dumb, as happened to St. Paul at his conversion, and by not

* This sentence is altogether unintelligible to me.

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giving her any knowledge as to *how*, or in what manner, this favour is bestowed which she enjoys; for the great delight which the soul then finds is, from seeing herself approach near to God. But when He really unites Himself with her, she neither understands nor knows anything, for all the faculties are lost and absorbed. But here it is in another way, for now our good God is pleased to take away the scales from our eyes, that she may see and understand something of the favour which He bestows upon her, though it be in a wonderful manner.

When she is brought into this mansion by an intellectual vision, all the Three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity discover themselves to her, by a certain way of representing the truth. She is accompanied with a certain inflaming of the soul, which comes upon her like a cloud of extraordinary brightness. These Three Persons are distinct, and by a wonderful knowledge given to the soul, she with great truth understands that all these Three Persons are one substance, one power, one knowledge, and one God alone. Hence, what we behold with faith, the soul here (as one may say) understands by sight, though this sight is not with the eyes of the body, because it is not an imaginary vision. All the Three Persons here communicate themselves to her, and speak to her, and make her understand those words mentioned in the Gospel, where our Lord said, "that He, and the Father, and the Holy Ghost, would come and dwell with the soul that loves Him and keeps His commandments."*

O! my Lord! what a different thing is the hearing and believing of these words, from understanding in this way how true they are. Such a soul is every day more astonished, because these words never seem to depart from her; but she clearly sees (in the manner above mentioned), that they are in the

* These words are only the substance of what the Saint alludes to.

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deepest recess of the soul—(how it is, she cannot express, since she is not learned), and she perceives this divine company in herself.

You may imagine, that the soul is so out of herself, and so absorbed, that she can attend to nothing: on the contrary, she is more occupied than formerly, in whatever relates to the service of God; and when she is not engaged, she is still with this delightful company, and, if the soul be not wanting to God, He will never fail (in my opinion) manifestly to discover His presence to her. She has a strong confidence that God, who has bestowed this favour upon her, will not forsake her, so that she should lose it; and well may she think so, though she does not cease to use more care than ever in endeavouring not to displease Him in anything.

Having this presence with her, must not be understood that it is so as clearly as it was first discovered to her, and at some other times, when God is pleased to give her this favour; because, if it were so, it would be impossible to mind anything else, or even to live among men. But though it be not with so much light, yet whenever she reflects upon it, she always finds herself in this company. For example, suppose a person, together with some others, were in a room full of light, and after shutting the windows were to be left in the dark, one would not know they were there, because the light to see them by is taken away. You may ask, whether one be able to open the windows, in order to see them again, when one wishes? I answer, no; but only when our Lord is pleased to open the understanding. He is sufficiently merciful to her, by His never leaving her, and in being willing that the should understand this with such evidence.

His Divine Majesty here seems to be willing, by this admirable company, to prepare her for some greater favour; for it is clear that thereby she is greatly strengthened for advancing in perfection, and

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casting away the fear she sometimes had in other favours bestowed upon her, as I have already mentioned. And so it was, for the person found herself improved in everything, and she thought that, notwithstanding the cares and troubles she met with, the soul* always remained in that mansion in such a manner, that she thought there was a division between her and her soul; and, meeting with great troubles, which happened to her a little after God had bestowed this favour upon her, she complained of her soul, as Martha did of Mary, that she was always enjoying this quiet at her pleasure, and left her plunged in so many troubles and occupations, that she could not keep her company.

This may appear to you foolishness; but what I have said is indeed the truth; for though it be certain that the soul is entirely united, what I say is no fancy or delusion, because it is very common. On this account I said that things internal are seen in such a way; that it is certain there is a clear difference between the soul and the spirit; and though in general they are one and the same thing, yet between them there may be perceived a division so subtile, that sometimes it seems the one works in a way different from the other, and so also is the knowledge which our Lord gives them. It also seems to me, that the soul is different from the faculties. In a word, there are so many and such subtile differences in our interior, that it would be a presumption in me to attempt to explain them. In heaven we shall see them, if our Lord in His goodness shall grant us the favour of bringing us there, where we can understand these secrets.

* "Lo essencial de su alma" is the original expression, which I am unable to understand.

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CHAPTER II.

SHE CONTINUES THE SAME DISCOURSE, AND EXPLAINS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE SPIRITUAL UNION AND SPIRITUAL MARRIAGE: THIS SHE ILLUSTRATES BY SOME COMPARISONS.

We will now speak of the divine and spiritual marriage, though such a sublime favour cannot be entirely possessed in this life, or perfectly accomplished, since if we once leave God we shall quite lose so great a good. The first time God bestows this favour His Majesty is pleased to discover himself to the soul by an imaginary vision of His Most Sacred Humanity, in order that she may fully understand it, and be not ignorant that she receives so immense a gift. To others He may appear in another form: to her of whom we speak* our Lord showed himself immediately after she had communicated, in a figure of great splendour, beauty, and majesty, just as He was after His resurrection. He said to her, "That now was the time she should consider His affairs as hers, and that he would take care of hers." Other words were uttered, more fit to be felt than spoken.

You may perhaps think that this was no novelty, because at other times our Lord represented himself to this soul in this same way. But this was so far different, that it left her quite out of herself, and quite astonished, both because this vision came with great force, and on account of the words which He spoke; and also because, in the interior of the soul, where He had represented himself, she had never heard any except in the preceding vision. You must understand, that there is an immense difference between this and the preceding mansions; and the difference is as great between the spiritual espousals

* The Saint no doubt alludes to herself in this place.

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and the spiritual marriage, as there is between those who are only affianced, and those who are really united in matrimony.

I have already mentioned, that though these comparisons be used (because none fitter can be found); yet it should be understood that here the body is no more remembered than if the soul were out of it, and much *less* in the spiritual marriage; for this secret union is effected in the interior centre of the soul, which must certainly be where God himself resides, and He (in my opinion) requires no door to enter at. In all that I have hitherto said, the effects seem to be brought about by means of the senses and faculties, and the representation of our Lord's humanity must certainly be of this nature. But that is far different which takes place here in the union of the spiritual marriage. Our Lord appears in this centre of the soul, not by an imaginary, but an intellectual vision, though it is more subtile than those I have mentioned before. Such did He appear to the Apostles, without entering in at the door, when He said to them "Pax vobis."

That which God here communicates to the soul in an instant is so great a secret, and so sublime a grace, and what she feels is such an excessive delight, that I know nothing to compare it to, except that our Lord is pleased at that moment to manifest to her the glory which is in heaven; and this He does in a more sublime way than by any vision or spiritual delight. More cannot be said (as far as can be understood) than that this soul becomes one with God;* for as He himself is a spirit, His Majesty is pleased to discover the love He has for us, by making certain persons understand how it extends, in order that we may praise His greatness, because He has vouchsafed to unite himself to a creature in such a way, that as in the marriage state husband and wife can no more

* Literally, "Queda el espiritu desta alma hecho una cosa con Dios," &c.

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be separated, so He will never be separated from her.

The spiritual espousals is different, for this is often dissolved, and so also is union; for though "union" is the joining of two things into one, they may at last be divided, and may subsist apart. We generally see that this favour of our Lord quickly passes away, and the soul afterwards does not enjoy that company, that is, so as to know it. But in that other favour of our Lord this is not the case, for the soul always remains with her God in that centre.

Let us suppose "union" to be like two *tapers*, so exactly joined together, that the light of both makes but one; or that the wick, light, and wax, are all one and the same, but that, afterwards, one taper may be easily divided from the other, and then two distinct tapers will remain, and the wick will be distinct from the wax. But here (in the spiritual espousals) it is like water descending from heaven into a river or spring, where one is so mixed with the other, that it cannot be discovered which is the river-water, and which the rain-water. It is, also, like a small rivulet running into the sea, whose waters cannot be separated from each other; or as if there were two windows in a room, at which one great light entered; but which, though entering in divided, yet makes but one light within. This is, perhaps, that which St. Paul means, where he says: "He who adheres to God, is one with Him,"* alluding to this sublime marriage, which presupposes that God is united to the soul by union. He likewise says: "Mihi vivere Christus est, et mori lucrum" (To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain). I think the soul may say the same here; for here the butterfly dies—of which we have spoken, and this with very great joy—because now her life is Christ. This in time is best known by the effects, for it is clearly

* These are not the exact words of the text.

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seen, by certain secret inspirations, that it is God who gives life to the soul; and these inspirations are often so very lively, that they cannot in any way be doubted, because the soul perceives them very well, though they cannot be expressed. But the feeling is so great, that sometimes it produces certain amorous words,* which, it appears, one cannot help uttering; as for example: "O life of my life! my support which upholdest me!" together with other like expressions. From those divine breasts, wherewith it seems God continually supports the soul, streams of milk issue, which comfort all the people of the castle; for it seems our Lord wishes them to enjoy, in some manner, that abundance which the soul enjoys; and that, from this vast river, in which the little spring is swallowed up, there should, sometimes, flow a quantity of that water, in order to support those who are to serve these two spouses, in that which relates to the body. And just as if a person, who should be suddenly plunged in this water, without thinking of any such thing, could not help feeling himself wet; so, in the same manner, but with more certainty, are these operations I am speaking about discerned; because as a great quantity of water could not fall upon us, if there were no principle† whence it descended; so here we clearly see, that there is one in our interior who sends forth these darts, and gives life to this life; and that there is a sun, from which proceeds that great light, which is conveyed to the powers from the interior of the soul.

She does not, as I have said, stir from this centre, nor does she lose her peace, for He Himself who gave it to the apostles, when they were assembled together, can give it to her also.

I have been thinking, that this salutation of our Lord contained more no doubt—than the mere

* "Unas Palabras regaladas."

† The meaning seems to be, if there were *no cause* which produced it.

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words outwardly represented; the same may be said regarding our Lord telling the glorious Magdalen "to go in peace;" for as the words of our Lord are *deeds* in us, so these words must certainly produce such effects upon those souls who are already disposed, as to take from them all that is corporeal in the soul, and leave it a pure spirit, in order that it might be united with the Uncreated Spirit in this celestial union. It is very certain, that by disengaging ourselves from all creatures, and withdrawing ourselves from them for the love of God, the same Lord will fill us with Himself. When our Lord was once praying for His Apostles, He requested that they might be "one with the Father and with Him," as Christ our Lord was in the Father and the Father in Him. I know not what love can be greater than this: and here let us all not fail to enter into this union, since His Majesty has said, "I pray not for them only, but for all those who shall believe in me." He likewise said, "I am in them." How true, O my God! are these words, and how well does the soul in this prayer understand them! And we should all understand them, were it not through our own fault, since the words of Jesus Christ, our King and Lord, cannot fail. But as we do not prepare ourselves properly, and do not remove everything from us which might obstruct this light, hence we do not behold ourselves in this glass in which we look, and wherein our image is engraven.

But let us return to what we were saying. After our Lord has conducted the soul into His mansion, which is the centre of the soul, as they say—the empyreal heaven where God resides is not moved like the other part is; and so it seems, that when the soul enters there, those motions do not take place in the soul, which used to be in the faculties and imagination, so that they can hurt her or take away her peace.

I may seem to mean, that the soul by obtaining

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this favour becomes *secure* as regards her salvation, and does not afterwards relapse. But I do not say any such thing; and whenever I speak on this subject, and seem to mean that the soul is secure, my words must be understood thus, viz., as long as the Divine Majesty holds her in His hand, and she does not offend Him. I know for certain, that though she see herself in this state, and though it may continue some years, she does not, therefore, think herself secure; but rather she has greater fears than formerly, and is more careful to avoid any small offence against God, as I shall mention hereafter; she also has such ardent desires of serving Him, and such continual pain and confusion, to see how little she can do, and how much she is obliged to do, that it is no small cross, but rather a great mortification; for in doing penance, the greater it is, the more delight does the soul feel. Her true penance is, when God takes away her health and strength, so that she is unable to do any penance; and though I have in another place shown the great affliction this causes, yet here it is much greater; and all certainty must come from the root, into which she is grafted; just as a tree which grows near running water looks greener and bears fruit better. Why then should we be astonished at the desires which this soul has, since the true spirit of her* has become one with that celestial water of which we spoke?

But to return to what I was saying. It is not intended that the faculties, senses, and passions should always enjoy this peace. The soul indeed does; but in the other mansions there are seasons of war, of troubles, and of pains, though in such a manner as not to take away her peace; and this happens very commonly.

It is so difficult to explain how the spirit is lodged in this centre of our soul, and even to believe it, that

* "Pues el verdadero espiritu della està hecho uno con el agua celestial."

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I fear, sisters, my inability to explain it may be some temptation to you not to believe what I say; for, to assert that there are crosses and troubles, and yet that the soul is at peace, is difficult to imagine. I wish to give you a few comparisons; and God grant they may prove such as may in some degree illustrate the subject. But should they not be to the purpose, yet I know that what I say is the truth. The king is in his palace, yet there may be many wars in his kingdom, and many offensive things done; still he does not on this account cease to be on his throne. And so it is here; though there be many tumults and many poisonous creatures in the other mansions, and the noise of them is heard, yet no such things enter into this mansion, or force the soul to remove from hence; and though they give her some pain, yet it is not in a way to disturb her and deprive her of her peace; for the passions are now subdued in such a way, that they are afraid to enter here, because they go away still more mortified. The whole body is in pain; but if the head be sound, no harm can be done to it. I smile at these comparisons, for they do not satisfy me; but I can find no better. Whatever you may think of them, I have spoken the truth.

CHAPTER III.

SHE MENTIONS SOME WONDERFUL EFFECTS PRODUCED BY THE PRAYER ALREADY SPOKEN OF.

SINCE we have said that this butterfly dies with very great joy, because she has found rest, and that Christ lives in her, let us now consider what kind of a life she leads, or what is the difference between her present state, and her former when she was alive; for we shall see by the effects, whether that be true

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which has been mentioned. As far as I understand, these following are some of the effects.

The first is a forgetfulness of herself, so that she truly seems, as I have said, no longer to exist; for she is affected in such a way, that she neither knows herself, nor remembers that there is either heaven, or life, or honour destined for her, being entirely engaged in seeking the glory of God; and hence it seems that the words spoken by His Majesty have effected the work, viz., that she should mind His affairs, and that He would take care of hers; thus she is not troubled at whatever happens to her. But she so strangely forgets herself, that (as I have already said) she seems to herself not to exist, nor would she desire to live, except when she perceives she can in any way advance, however little, the honour and glory of God, for which she would very gladly lay down her life. But do not imagine, daughters, that on this account she neglects to take any care *about eating and sleeping* (which are a great torment to her), and doing everything to which she is obliged by her state of life. We are speaking of *interior* things; for as regards exterior works, little can be said; it is rather an affliction to her, to consider how all that she is able to do by her own strength is a mere nothing. Whatever she understands would conduce to the honour of our Lord, she would not omit for anything in the world.

The second effect is a great desire for suffering; yet it is not like what she formerly had, for that used to disturb her. The desire which such souls have that God's will may be done in them is so excessive, that they receive with pleasure whatever His Majesty sends them. If He wish them to suffer, they are content; if not, they do not torment themselves about it, as they used to do at other times. These souls feel likewise a great interior joy when they are persecuted, for then they enjoy more peace than that I have ever before spoken of; and they do

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not feel the least hatred against their persecutors; nay, they conceive for them a particular affection—so much so, that if they see them in any affliction, they feel it keenly, pity them, and most sincerely recommend them to God, on condition that He would, in exchange, bestow these afflictions on themselves, in order that they might not offend His Majesty.

What I wonder at the most of all is, that as you have seen how great were the sufferings and afflictions which they endured through their longing to die in order to enjoy our Lord, so also is the desire great which they have to serve Him, that so He may be praised by their means; they also desire to benefit, if they can, some soul; hence, they not only do *not* desire to die, but to live many years, and to endure very great crosses, in order that our Lord, by their means, may be honoured, however little. And though they were sure, when the soul left the body, immediately to enjoy God, they make no account of this, and think as little on the glory which the saints possess; they do not desire it at present, since all their glory consists in their being able to assist, in something, their crucified Lord, especially when they see Him so much offended, and so few, who, disengaged from all other things, have His honour truly at heart.

It is true, that sometimes when they forget this, the desires of enjoying God, and of leaving this land of exile, come upon them with tenderness, considering how little they serve Him; but, immediately returning to themselves, they reflect how they have Him continually with them, and with this they are satisfied, offering to His Majesty their willingness to live, as being the most precious offering they can make. They have no fear of death, but look upon it as a sweet trance. The fact is, He who before gave those desires with that excessive torture, now gives this other: may he blessed and praised for ever!

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Thus the desires of these souls do not now run after consolations and delights, because they have Christ our Lord with them, and His Majesty now lives in them. It is manifest, that as His life was nothing else but a continual torment, so He makes ours such, at least by desire, and He leads us as being feeble, though in other things, when He sees necessary, He gives us strength. They feel in themselves a disengagement from everything, and a desire of being always alone, or employed in things relating to the good of some soul. They have no aridities, nor internal troubles, but always have a memory and a tenderness for our Lord, so that they would gladly do nothing but praise Him. And when they become negligent, our Lord himself excites them, so that it is clearly seen that this impulse (or, I know not what to call it) proceeds from the interior of the soul, as I mentioned when speaking of impetuosities. Here, it is done with great sweetness, but it comes neither from the fancy nor from the memory, nor any other thing, whereby one can discover that the soul did nothing on her part. This is so usual, and happens so often, that one may very easily observe it. For as a fire, however large it may be, does not send forth its flames downwards, but upwards, so this internal motion is here discovered to proceed from the centre of the soul; and thus it excites the faculties.

Truly, were there no other advantage in this method of prayer, than discovering the particular care God takes in communicating Himself to us, and how he entreats us to abide with Him, I think that all the pains endured for the enjoyment of these sweet and penetrating proofs of His love are well bestowed. This, sisters, you will find true by experience, for I think that when a soul has arrived at the Prayer of Union, our Lord takes this care of us, if we keep His commandments.

When then this shall happen to you, remember it

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belongs to this "Interior Mansion," where God resides in our soul; and praise Him exceedingly, for that message certainly comes from Him, and the note* is written with so much affection, and in such a way, that He intends *you* alone should understand the handwriting, and what He wishes you to do; hence, then, on no account neglect to answer His Majesty, however engaged in exterior things, and in conversation with other persons, for it may happen oftentimes, that our Lord will wish to bestow this secret favour upon you in public; and, as the answer must be interior, it is very easy to make an act of love, or to say what St. Paul said: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Then, in many ways, He will teach you what you should do to please Him; and the time is very opportune, for then He seems to hear us. This delicate touch of His almost always disposes the soul to be able to do with a firm resolution *that* which has been mentioned before.

The difference between this mansion and the rest is, that there are scarcely ever any aridities, or interior disturbances, like what used to be at other times in all the rest; but the soul is almost always in quiet, and she is never afraid that this sublime gift would be counterfeited by the devil; and, therefore, she is confident it comes from God. As I have before mentioned, the senses or powers have nothing to do here, for His Majesty has discovered Himself to the soul, and He has taken her along with Him to a place, where (in my opinion) the devil dare not come, nor will our Lord allow him; and all the favours He bestows here on the soul are without her doing anything on her part, except what she has already done, in resigning herself entirely to God.

Whatever our Lord does to the soul, and all that He teaches her, passes in such quiet, and without noise, that it seems to me to resemble the building of Solomon's Temple, when no noise was heard; and so

* "Villete escrito con tanto amor," &c.

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in this Temple of God, for this mansion is His, wherein He and the soul sweetly enjoy each other in the most profound silence, there is no need for the understanding to stir, or to seek after anything, for the Lord who created it, wishes it to remain quiet here, and through a little chink to behold what passes within; for though at certain times this sight be lost and cannot be seen, yet it is only for a short time; since, in my opinion, the powers are not lost here, but they do not work; they are, as it were, stupified. I am astonished to see, that when the soul gets so far, all raptures are taken away from her, except at some few times. This taking away of the raptures, which I here speak of, relates to the exterior effects which these cause—such as losing our sense and heat, though some persons tell me, that these are merely accidents of the raptures, which, in reality, are not taken away, since the interior effect is rather increased. Hence, the raptures cease in the manner I have mentioned, and there are no more ecstasies nor flights of the spirit: if they come at all, it is very seldom, and almost never in public; nor do the great opportunities of devotion given to her help her herein, as they once used to do; hence, if she beheld a devout picture, or heard a sermon (which seemed almost as if she did not hear it), or listened to music, she was so troubled, like the poor butterfly, that everything frightened her, and made her take wing.

But here, either because she had found her repose, or has been so much in this mansion, she wonders at nothing, nor does she now find such solitude, since she enjoys such good company. In a word, sisters, be the cause whatever it may, for I know not, when our Lord begins to show the soul what is in this mansion, and when he has conducted her into it, this great infirmity, which was very troublesome to her, and which would not leave her before, now does leave her. This may be, because our Lord has now strengthened, enlarged, and disposed her; or, per-

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haps, because He wishes to make known in public what He has done secretly in these souls, for certain ends which His Majesty has in view, for His judgments are far beyond all that we can imagine.

These effects God bestows, together with all the rest which we have mentioned, in the degrees of prayer (if they be good), when the soul approaches to receive that kiss, which the Spouse in the Canticles desired: I think that here this petition is fulfilled. Here, water is given in abundance to the wounded hart; here, she delights in the tabernacle of God; here, the dove, which Noe sent out to see whether the flood had ceased, has found the olive-branch, a sign that she has discovered firm land amidst the surges and tempests of the world.*

O Jesus! who can tell how many things there are in the Scriptures, which illustrate this peace of the soul. Since Thou, O Lord! beholdest how important this is for us, make all Christians desirous of seeking after it; and in Thy mercy do not take it away from those, to whom Thou hast given it. In a word, until Thou give us *true* peace, and bring us there, where it will never end, we must always live in fear. I say "true peace!" not as if I meant, that what we have already were not such; but because if we leave God, the first war may return.

But what will such souls feel, on seeing that it is possible they may be deprived of so great a good? This consideration makes them proceed with more caution and vigilance, and endeavour to gather strength from their weakness, so as not through their own fault to omit any occasion which presents itself, of pleasing God better. The more they are favoured by His Majesty, the more diffident, humble, and fearful do they become of themselves; and because

* "Aqui se dan las aquas en abundancia à esta cierva que va herida: aqui se deleyta en el tabernaculo de Dios: aqui halla la paloma, que embiò Noe—à ver si era acabada la tempestad, la oliva por señal que ha hallado tierra firme," &c.

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they best understand their own miseries in these manifestations of God's greatness, and as their sins also appear the more grievous, they are often brought to such a state, that, like the publican in the Gospel, they dare not lift up their eyes. At other times they desire to live no longer, that so they may be secure, though, through the love which they have for God, they immediately wish again (as I said) to live, that so they may serve Him: whatever relates to them they commit to His mercy. Sometimes, the numerous favours which they have received make them more humble and more annihilated, for they fear lest it should be with them as it is with a ship overladen, which sinks the sooner to the bottom. I tell you, sisters, they do not want a cross, only it does not trouble them, nor rob them of their peace; but immediately it passes away, like a wave or a tempest, and then succeeds a calm; for the presence of our Lord, which they carry with them, soon makes them forget everything. May He be blessed and praised for ever by all His creatures. Amen.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SAINT CONCLUDES BY MENTIONING WHAT OUR LORD HAS PARTICULARLY IN VIEW, IN CONFERRING SUCH GREAT FAVOURS UPON THE SOUL.

You must not suppose, sisters, that the effects I have mentioned are always in the same degree in in these souls; for on this account I said, that our Lord sometimes leaves them in their natural condition; and then all the venomous things in the ditches, and in the other mansions, unite together to be revenged on them, for the time in which they could not get them in their power. It is true, this does not last long—a day perhaps, or a little more; and in this great tumult, which commonly arises from

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some occasion, one discovers how much the soul gains by the good company she has; for our Lord gives her great strength, never to turn aside in anything from His service, or from her pious resolutions: these seem even to increase within her, and she turns not from this firm resolution even by a first motion. This happens seldom (as I said): but our Lord wishes her not to forget her own state, in order that she may always be humble, and may understand how much she is indebted to His Majesty, and that she may also comprehend the greatness of the favour she receives, and may praise Him for it.

But do not think that these souls, because they have such ardent desires and firm resolutions, if not committing any imperfection for any earthly thing, do therefore not fall into many, and even sins: not willingly indeed, because, against this, our Lord gives such persons a very special assistance. I speak of "venial sins," for, as regards mortal, they are free, so far as they can understand, though not secure, since they may be guilty of some, of which they have no knowledge; and this is no small torment to them, when they think upon the souls which perish; and though they have, in some manner, great hopes of their not being of this number; yet, when they remember some mentioned in holy Scriptures, who seemed to be particular favourites of our Lord, as Solomon, who conversed so familiarly with His Majesty, they cannot help fearing. Let her amongst you, who feels the greatest security, fear the most, for, says David: "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord." If we beseech His Majesty always to preserve us from offending Him, this will be the greatest security we can have. May He be for ever praised. Amen.

It will be well, sisters, to make you acquainted with the end, for which our Lord bestows such great favours in this world; and though you might understand this by the effects—if you considered them

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well—yet I wish to repeat it here again to you, that so none of you may think it is only to caress such souls (which would be a great mistake), since His Majesty cannot bestow a greater favour upon us, than to give us a life to be spent in imitation of that which His beloved Son spent here on earth. Hence, I consider it certain, that these favours are given to strengthen our weakness, that we may be able to suffer something for His sake. We have always noticed, that those who have been nearest to Christ our Lord were the most afflicted. Consider what His glorious Mother suffered, and the glorious Apostles.

How, think you, was St. Paul able to endure such great labours? In him we see what effects true visions and contemplation produce, when they come from our Lord, and not from the imagination, or deceit of the devil. When he had these visions, did he hide himself, in order thereby to enjoy these delights, without applying himself to anything else? You see (as far as we can understand), he had not one day's rest; no, nor one night's, for he laboured at night for his living. I am greatly delighted with St. Peter, when, as he was flying from prison, our Lord appeared to him, and told him, "He was going to Rome to be crucified again." Whenever the office of this festival is said, in which the above words are mentioned, I feel a particular consolation in considering how St. Peter was affected, after having received this favour from our Lord, since it encouraged him immediately to meet death; and it was no small favour of our Lord, that St. Peter found one to put him to death.

O my sisters! how forgetful must that soul be of her own comfort, what little account must she make of honour, and how far is *she* from desiring to be esteemed in anything, in whom our Lord resides in so particular a manner! If she be entirely taken up with Him (as it is proper she should), she must be

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wholly forgetful of herself; and all her thoughts and study will be how to please this Lord, and by what means she may be able to express the love she has for Him. For this object does she pray, hereto does this spiritual marriage tend, from which good works always come. This is a true sign that the favour comes from God, for it is of little advantage to be solitary, to be making acts of love and of other virtues to our Lord, proposing and promising to do wonders for His honour, if, upon leaving that place, and an occasion offers, I do quite the contrary. I spoke incorrectly, when I said, "it is of little advantage," for all the time which is spent with God is very profitable; and His Majesty will sometimes find us means of accomplishing these resolutions, though we may be weak in fulfilling them afterwards, and this, perhaps, to our grief; for it often happens that, when He sees a soul very cowardly, He sends her a great affliction, much against her will, but He draws her out of it with profit; and when the soul afterwards perceives this, she is not so afraid to expose herself to the like again.

I wish to mention, that the affliction is but little, in comparison with the far greater gain which is acquired, when the works correspond with the acts and words mentioned; and that she who cannot do all at once, should do it gently, and by degrees; and if she wish to derive any benefit from prayer, she should also bend her will; for even in these little retired spots, she will not want many occasions of exercising patience. Remember, that this is much more important than I can express: fix your eyes on your crucified Lord, and everything will seem easy to you.

If His Majesty show His love for us by such wonderful works and torments, how can you desire to please Him by *words* only? Do you know what it is to be truly spiritual? It is to be the slaves of God: those who are signed with His mark—which is that

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of the cross—He may sell all over the world for slaves, as He Himself was sold; for as you have already given Him your liberty, that of being His slaves will not injure you, rather it will be a great favour for you. But unless souls be resolved to do this, they will never improve much, for (as I said) the foundation of all this building is humility; and if this be not very sincere, our Lord will not allow the building to rise high, lest it should fall entirely to the ground: this would not be for our good. Hence, sisters, in order that your humility may be well grounded, let each one of you endeavour to be inferior to all the rest, and to become their slave, seeking how to please and to serve them; because what you do in such cases is more for *your* benefit than for theirs. By laying down such strong stones, the castle can never fall. I repeat, it is necessary, for this purpose, that the foundation should not consist of prayer and contemplation only; for unless you acquire virtues by the exercise of them, you will always be behind: God grant it may be merely a fault of not increasing; for you know well, that, in the spiritual life, he who does not increase, must *de*crease. I consider it impossible for love to stand still.

You may imagine, perhaps, that I speak of beginners, and that these may afterwards take their rest. But I have already told you, the rest which these souls possess in their interior is given them, because they possess so very little in the exterior. For what end, think you, are those inspirations, or to speak more correctly, those aspirations and messages, which the soul, from her interior centre, sends to the people around the castle, and to the other mansions, which are outside that in which she resides? Is it, do you think, that they may send themselves to sleep? No, no, no! for then it excites a fiercer war, to keep the faculties, senses, and all that is corporeal, from being idle, than it did when she suffered with them; for then she knew not the immense benefit which

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afflictions bring; and these, perhaps, have been the means employed by God to advance her so far. And as the company which she enjoys gives her greater strength than ever (for if David says, "with the holy thou wilt be holy," no doubt but that she, by becoming "one" with the strong, through so heavenly a union of spirit with spirit, must needs receive strength; and hence we shall find, that the saints acquired their strength both for suffering and dying), it is very certain, that with the strength which she thence derives, she assists all those within the castle, and even the body itself. It often seems to have no sense in it (being fortified with the strength which the soul has in her, and having drunk of the wine of this cellar into which her Spouse has conducted her, and from which He will not allow her to depart): this wine diffuses itself in the weak body, as the meat does, which, when taken, diffuses its strength to the head and the whole of the body. Hence, she has great trouble, as long as she lives, because, however much she does, her internal strength is far greater, and so is the war which she wages: everything that she does seems nothing to her.

Hence, we may account for the severe penances which many saints practised, and particularly the glorious Mary Magdalen, who had always been brought up amidst such delights: hence that hunger which our Father Elias had for the honour of His God; and which St. Dominic and St. Francis had for exciting the soul to praise Him: I assure you, these must have endured great things, through thus forgetting themselves. This I wish you, sisters, to endeavour to obtain: let us desire it, and employ ourselves in prayer, not in order to enjoy ourselves, but to obtain this strength to serve our Lord. Let us not beg to walk in a *new* way, for we shall lose ourselves at a better time. It would be very strange to suppose we could possess these favours from God by any other way, than by that along which He Him-

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self went, and all His saints. Never think of such a thing: believe me, Martha and Mary must go together in entertaining our Lord, and in order to have Him always with us, we must treat Him well, and provide food for Him. How could Mary have entertained Him in sitting always at his feet, if her sister had not helped her? His food is, that we should strive in every possible way that souls may be saved, and may praise him.

You may make two objections; one, that our Lord told Mary "she had chosen the better part;" true, because she had already performed the office of Martha, and showed great regard for our Lord, by washing His feet and wiping them with her hair. Do you think it was a small mortification to a woman of rank* as she was, to go along the streets, and perhaps alone (for her zeal made her take no notice in what way she went), and to go into a house she had never entered before? Then she had to endure the mortification of the Pharisee, and many other things besides; for, to behold in the city a woman such as she was make such a change, and as we know, among such wicked people, to whom it was sufficient only to see that she had an affection for our Lord, whom they so deeply hated; and when they remembered her former life, and how she had now desired to become a saint, for it was clear she must immediately change her dress and every other vanity, what would people do *then*, when now they talk of persons who are not so remarkable as she was? I tell you, sisters, "the better part fell to her lot, in the numerous afflictions and mortifications she had to endure; and had there been no more but that of seeing her Master so deeply hated, that was an intolerable cross: what, then, must have been those numerous crosses which she endured at the death of our Lord? I am convinced, that the reason why

* "A una señora como ella."

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she did not suffer martyrdom was, because she had endured it when she saw Him die, and during the years she lived afterwards, when she found herself absent from Him; this must have been a dreadful torment to her.

Hereby may be seen, that she did not always enjoy the delight of contemplation, at the feet of our Lord.

The other objection you may make is, that you neither have power nor opportunity of gaining souls to God, which you would very willingly do. But not being authorized to instruct or preach, as the Apostles did, you know not how to accomplish this. I have answered this objection somewhere, though I cannot tell whether or no I have done so in this book. But, because it is a matter which occupies your thoughts, through the ardent desires which our Lord gives you, I will not hesitate to repeat what I have said. I have already told you elsewhere, how the desire excites within us strong desires of doing things impossible, in order that we may leave what we have to do at present, so as to serve our Lord in things possible to be done, and may rest satisfied with having desired those *impossibilities*. Setting aside the consideration, that by prayer you can do great good, do not desire to benefit every one, except those who are in your company; a work so much the nobler, as you are so much the more indebted to them. Do you think the gain small, that you have such great humility and mortification, and that you are the servant of all; and that you also have such great charity for *them*, and such love for our Lord, that this fire inflames every one, and you are continually exciting them by the practice of your other virtues? Your gain will be exceedingly great, and your service highly pleasing to our Lord; and by doing this which you are able, His Majesty will observe your readiness to do much more, if you could, and He will accordingly reward you as if you had gained many souls to

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Him. You will reply: "This is not converting them, because they are all good." Who has suggested this objection? The better they are made by your means, the more pleasing to God will their praises of Him be, and their prayers will be more profitable to their neighbours.

In a word, my sisters, I will conclude with this advice: do not erect towers without a foundation, because our Lord does not pay so much regard to the greatness of the works, as to the *love* whereby they are performed.* When we do what we can, His Majesty will make us more and more powerful every day, provided we do not grow tired immediately, but that, during the short space of this life (much shorter, perhaps, than any of you may imagine), we offer both interiorly and exteriorly to God the sacrifice that we are able; and His Majesty will unite it with that which He offered to His father on the cross for us, in order that it may receive such value as our affection deserves, however small or trifling the work may be. May His Majesty grant, my sisters and daughters, that we may all meet together in that place where we may for ever please Him, and may He give me grace to perform some of those things which I have mentioned to you. This I beg through the merits of His Son, who liveth and reigneth for ever and ever. I acknowledge my confusion is great, and, therefore, through the same Lord, I beseech you not to forget this poor sinner in your prayers.

Though when I began to write this discourse, I felt the confusion above mentioned, yet after it was finished I was exceedingly satisfied with it, and I consider my trouble (which I acknowledge to have been very little) to be well bestowed. Hence, considering your very strict inclosure, and the few recreations, my sisters, which you have, and the want of some conveniences that are requisite in some

* "El Señor no mira tanto la grandeza de las obras, como el amor con que se hazen."

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of our monasteries, I think it will be some pleasure to you to recreate yourselves in this "Interior Castle," into which you may enter without leave of your superioress, and walk there at any hour you please. It is true you cannot enter into all the mansions of the castle by your own strength, though you may think it very great, except the Lord thereof allow you to enter. I wish, then, to advise you not to use any violence, if you meet with some resistance, for you may thus displease Him so far as to cost you some trouble.

He is a great lover of humility, and by considering yourselves unworthy even to enter the "Third Mansion," you will the sooner obtain His good-will and favour to allow you afterwards to enter the fifth; and you may serve Him there in such a manner, by often repairing thither, that He may at length admit you into that "Mansion" reserved for Himself, whence you should never depart unless you are called away by the superioress, whose will this great Lord wishes you to observe as punctually as His own. And, though by her command you may be much abroad, yet when you return, He will always open the door to you. Being once accustomed to this castle, you will find rest in all things, though exceedingly painful, with the hope of returning there again, and no one will be able to take it away from you.

Though I have spoken only of "Seven Mansions," yet in each of these seven there are many others, above, below, and on the sides, with beautiful gardens, fountains, and other various delights, so that you would desire even to be dissolved into the praises of that great God, who created your soul to His image and likeness. If you see anything in this method, which helps to instruct you in the knowledge of Him, be assured that His Majesty has said it in order to comfort and encourage you. Whatever you find amiss, know it was spoken by myself. Through the great desire I have of being some use in

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assisting you to serve this my Lord and God, I entreat you, every time you read this book, to praise His Majesty exceedingly, and beg of Him to advance His Church, to enlighten the Lutherans, and to obtain the pardon of my sins, and deliverance from purgatory, where, perhaps, I shall be when this shall be given you (should it be published after the learned have seen it). If you meet with any error, it is because I know no better; and in everything, I submit to the judgment of the Holy Roman Catholic Church in which I live, and in which I do protest and promise I shall live and die; praised be the Lord our God, and blessed for ever and ever. Amen, Amen.

LAUS DEO SEMPER.

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APPENDIX.

I.

THE following letter from the Venerable Father Avila, will I am sure, be read with interest. It was addressed to St. Teresa, in consequence of her having sent him the manuscript of her Life for his examination. I have not translated the letter from the Spanish, not having the original by me, but have taken it from Woodhead.

"*To Mother Teresa de Jesus.*

"The grace and peace of our Lord be ever with you.

"When I received the book sent to me, it gave me occasion to think, not so much that I was a competent judge of the things contained therein, as that through the mercy of our Lord I might in some way derive benefit from its doctrine. I thank God that having seen it, though I am much comforted in this latter respect, without considering the other; yet the respect I owe to the subject, and to the person who recommends it to me, seems to suggest to me the propriety of giving my opinion on the book, at least in general.

"The work, as it is, should not pass through the hands of many, because certain expressions need correction in some places and explanation in others. There are other things which may be beneficial to *your* soul, and yet may not be so to others who might follow them, because particular cases whereby God conducts some people, are not suitable to others. These, or the greater part of them, are here marked out by me, so that I may put them in order and prepare them when I shall be able. I hope to find an opportunity of sending them to you hereafter. At present, if you saw my infirmities and other necessary employments, I am sure they would move you rather to compassionate, than blame me for any negligence.

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"The doctrine concerning prayer is for the most part good, and you may very well use it and follow it. In the Raptures I find the signs which *true* raptures have. The method of God's teaching a soul without the imagination, and without interior words, is safe, and I find nothing to blame. St. Augustine speaks very well of it. The interior speeches have deceived many in our days, and the external are less secure. To perceive that they do not come from ourself is an easy matter, but to discover whether they be from a good or a bad spirit is harder. There are several rules given for knowing whether they come from God. One is, if they are spoken in a time of need, or for some great good—for example, to comfort one who is tempted, or who despairs, or as a warning against some danger. As a good man does not speak words which are not well weighed, so much less does God. This being considered, and it being evident that the words are not opposed to Holy Scripture and to the doctrine of the Church, it seems to me that those in the book are from God.

"Those visions which are imaginary or corporeal, are those which are more doubtful. By no means ought they to be desired, but avoided as much as possible, though not by making signs of contempt, unless when we know for certain it is an evil spirit. Persons ought to beseech our Lord not to conduct them by the way of seeing, but that the glorious sight of Him and His saints may be reserved for heaven, and that here in this life He would be pleased to conduct them in the plain, beaten road, as He guides the faithful. By other good means they ought to endeavour to show these things.

"But if, though doing all this, the visions should continue and the soul reap profit thereby, and if no vanity is excited, but greater humility; and if that which is spoken is the doctrine of the Church, and it should continue a long time, and with a certain inward satisfaction (which is better enjoyed than expressed), there is no reason to avoid them, though no one ought to rely on his own judgment, but immediately mention the matter to one who can enlighten him. This is the universal remedy that must be used in all these matters; and to hope in God, who, if we have humility to submit to the opinion

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of another, will not suffer a soul to be deceived that desires to be secure.

"And no one should be afraid, or blame these things, because he sees that the person on whom the favours are bestowed is not perfect; for it is no new thing to the goodness of our Lord, to make men good from being bad; and even from grievous sins to draw great blessings, by giving them very delicious relishes of Himself, as I myself have seen. Who shall set limits to the mercy of our Lord? And especially, since these favours are not given for merit, or because one is stronger than another, nay, they are often given to some, because they are weaker; moreover, as they do not make a person more holy, so they are not always given to those who are more holy.

"Those people are very unreasonable who do not believe these wonders, because they are very sublime; they think it incredible that Infinite Majesty should stoop to such loving communications with His creatures. But it is written that 'God is love,' and if love, it must be a love and goodness infinite. Now, it is no wonder for such love and goodness to display such excesses of love, at which those who understand it not are troubled; and though many know it by faith, yet the particular experience of the affectionate, and more than affectionate, converse of God with whom he pleases, cannot be known thoroughly till this communication be attained. I have seen many scandalized at beholding the great acts of the love of God towards His creatures; and as they themselves are very far from the like, they never imagine that God does to others what he does not do for them; whereas it is reasonable, that because it is a work of love, and of a love that excites admiration, it should be taken for a proof that it is from God, since He is wonderful in His works, and much more in those of His mercy.

"Methinks, by that which appears in the book, you have resisted these favours even more than was proper; I think, too, they have done good to your soul; and especially they have made you know your own misery and defects, and excited you to correct them; they have continued a long time, and always with spiritual profit; they excite you to the love of God, and to a despising of yourself, and to acts of penance. I do not see, then, why I

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should blame them. I am rather inclined to consider them good, upon the condition that caution be always used not to rely entirely upon them if there be something unusual, or you should be commanded to do something singular, which is not very plain and easy. In all these and the like cases one must always suspend his belief, and take advice. It should also be noted, that even though these things should be from God, yet others might be introduced by the enemy, and therefore a person should always be suspicious. Moreover, till it be known they are from God, one should not trust much to them, since holiness consists only in having an humble love of God and our neighbour. These other things (though good) one must value less, and place their whole study in acquiring true humility, and the love of our Lord.

"It is likewise necessary not to adore these visions, but only Jesus Christ in heaven, and not that which is represented to me in my imagination; but to consider it merely as an image, conducting me to that which is represented. I say also, that the things mentioned in this book have happened to some persons even in our days, and this with great certainty that they were from God, whose hand is not shortened, so as to prevent Him from doing that now, which He did in former times, and in weak instruments too, that so He might be glorified.

"Go on, then, in your method of prayer, but always guard against thieves, and inquire after the right way. I thank our Lord, who has given you His holy love, the knowledge of yourself, and a love of penance and the cross. I cannot believe I have written this letter by my own strength, for I have none. I suppose your prayer has enabled me. I request of you, for the love of Jesus Christ, to undertake the charge of always praying for me.

"Jesus be glorified by all, and in all. Amen. From Montiglia, September 12th, 1568.

"Your servant in Christ,

"JOHN D'AVILA."

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II.

With regard to visions and revelations, &c., Protestants especially should remember, that there are several *tests* and *rules* laid down by which these visions can be almost infallibly distinguished from the fancies of the imagination, or the illusions of the devil. Cardinal Bona thus speaks of the "Visions and Revelations" of St. Teresa :—

"Sic ab hominibus divinâ et humanâ sapientiâ præditis, S. Theresiæ visiones et revelationes approbatæ fuerint variis indiciis et argumentis, quæ operæ pretium est hîc summatim referre, ut ad hæc veluti ad Lydium lapidem—oblatas revelationes examinare, bonumque spiritum à malo discernere valeant, quicumque huic curæ incumbunt. Spiritum igitur Theresiæ bonum esse, et veras revelationes hæc signa demonstrârunt.

"1. Semper timebat diabolicas illusiones, ac propterea numquam visiones petiit aut desideravit : imò, potiùs Deum exorabat ut eam duceret per viam consuetam, hoc solum optans, ut fieret in eâ divina voluntas.

"2. Cùm soleat dæmon præcipere, ut quæ revelat nemini dicantur, illa semper à spiritu sibi apparente audiebat, ut communicaret cum viris doctis—ne fortè tacens deciperetur : ideo se virorum illustrium examini subjecit, qui tunc doctrini et sanctitatis laude in Hispaniâ florebant, quales fuerunt Petrus de Alcantara, Franciscus Borgia, Joannes Abulensis, Balthasar Alvarez, Dominicus Bannes, et alii.

"3. Suis directoribus exactissimè obediebat, et post visiones magis in charitate ac humilitate proficiebat.

"4. Libentiùs cum illis agebat, qui minus creduli et magis timidi erant ; eosque magis amabat, à quibus persecutiones patiebatur.

"5. In ejus mente summa tranquillitas et jucunditas erat, exuperans omnes mundi consolationes.

"6. Ardentissimus in eâ zelus salutis animarum, purissimæ cogitationes, magnus candor, fervens desiderium perfectionis. Si quæ in illâ imperfectio, si quis defectus erat, de illo semper reprehendi ab eo solebat, qui intus loquebatur.

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"7. Dictum est ei, si quæ justa sunt à Deo peteret, ea indubitanter obtineret: multa autem petiit, et semper obtinuit. Quicumque cum illâ versabantur, nisi prava dispositio obstaret, ad modestiam, ad pietatem, ad amorem Dei ex ejus consuetudine excitabantur.

"8. Visiones, ut plurimùm, ei contingebant post longam et ferventem orationem, sive post communionem: et in illâ accendebant ardentissimum desiderium pro Deo patiendi.

"9. Carnem suam jejuniis, flagellis, ciliciis castigabat: et gaudebat in tribulationibus, murmurationibus, et infirmitatibus.

"10. Solitudinem amabat, abhorrens ab hominum conversatione, et ab omni rerum terrenarum affectu prorsus avulsa.

"11. Jam in prosperis quàm in adversis—eundem semper tenorem, eandem animi tranquillitatem servabat.

"12. Nihil unquam in ipsius revelationibus, earumque adjunctis viri docti observârunt, quod à regulis fidei et Christianæ perfectionis alienum esset: nec erat in illis quod posset reprehendi. Hæc signa, si in aliquo deprehensa fuerint, nullatenus dubitandum quin ejus revelationes à Deo sint."—De Discretione Spirituum, cap. xx.

The substance of the preceding statements of the Cardinal, whose learning and judgment in such matters are universally admitted, is this:—

1. The Saint always feared diabolical illusions, and therefore she never asked nor desired any visions or raptures: she even besought our Lord to lead her by the usual beaten path, and only desired that His will might be done.

2. She was always told in her visions to communicate with learned men, lest by her silence she might be deceived; whereas the evil spirit usually commands those whom he deceives, not to reveal to any one what is said. But Teresa submitted to be examined by men who, at that time, were most illustrious in Spain for their learning and virtue; such as St. Peter of Alcantara, St. Francis Borgia, Ven. John of Avila, Balthasar Alvarez, Domingo Bañez, &c.

3. She was most scrupulously obedient to her confessors; and after she had been favoured with these visions, she advanced more and more in love and humility.

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4. Those who persecuted her the most violently, *them* she loved the most.

5. There always reigned in her soul the greatest tranquillity and peace, exceeding far all worldly consolations.

6. She had a most ardent zeal for the salvation of souls; her thoughts were most pure; her candour admirable; her humility most profound, and her desires of perfection most fervent.

7. Whoever conversed with her were powerfully excited to modesty, humility, mortification, and divine love.

8. Her visions, &c. generally came only after long and fervent prayer, or after receiving the holy communion.

9. She chastised her body by fasting, hair-shirts, and other austerities. She rejoiced in tribulations, calumnies, and infirmities.

10. She loved solitude, and despised the world and all its vanities.

In addition to these facts, I may add, that she had a wonderful experience of the stratagems of the devil, and was consequently very skilful in detecting them. She knew well how to distinguish the operations of the imagination from those which were divine. (See her Life, chap. 25.) In her "Foundations," chap. 12, 13, she speaks at some length on the great danger and evils which arise from *melancholy*. She would not admit any one to be a nun who was inclined to this infirmity. What is very remarkable, she never heard anything in her visions and rapts which did not come to pass. (See her Life, chap. 25.) She frequently foretold things herself, all of which happened. She never wished or intended her works to be published. All of them were written, only by the express *command* of her superiors.

After her death, numerous miracles, attested authentically by numerous witnesses, proved her sanctity, and showed that she was no impostor or enthusiast. (See her Life, by Ribera, Yepez, S. Antonio, and especially the last vol. of the Bollandists.)

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III.

ALTHOUGH the "Interior Castle" is written with a wonderful purity and clearness of style, quite superior to that of other authors contemporary with the saint; yet the reader who understands Spanish will see, that a translator labours under many great difficulties in endeavouring to render so sublime a work into good English. The difficulties arise, both from the peculiar style of the saint, and the nature of the subject, so different altogether from earthly themes.

The French translation by D'Andilly was of no use whatever to me: in many places, it is more a paraphrase than a correct translation. Woodhead's translation, however, I found very useful; indeed I could not have gone on without it—this I am not ashamed to acknowledge. I subjoin a few extracts from the original Spanish. The edition I have made use of is the Antwerp, 1649. It is not the best edition.

"O Señor, tomad en cuenta lo mucho que passamos en este camino, por falta de saber. Y es el mal, que como no pensamos que ay que saber mas de pensar en vos, aun no sabemos preguntar à los que saben; ni entendemos que ay que preguntar; y passanse terribles trabajos, porque no nos entendemos; y lo que no es malo, sino bueno, pensamos que es mucha culpa. De aqui proceden las afflictiones de mucha gente que trata de oracion: y el quexarse de trabajos interiores, alomenos en gente que no tiene letras, y vienen las melancolias, y à perder la salud, y aun dexarlo del todo, por no considerar que ay un mundo interior. Y ansi como no podemos tener el movimiento del cielo, sino que anda à friessa con toda velocidad: tan poco podemos tener nuestro pensamiento; y luego. Metemos todas las potencias del alma con el, y nos parece que estamos perdidas, y gastando mal el tiempo que estamos delante de Dios. Y estàse el alma por ventura toda junta con el en las Moradas muy cercanas, y el pensamiento en el arrabal del castillo, padeciendo con mil

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bestias fieras y ponzoñosas, y mereciendo con este padecer. Y ansi ni nos ha de turbar, ni lo hemos de dexar, que es lo que pretende el demonio : y por la mayor parte todas las inquietudes y trabajos vienen deste no nos entender," &c.—Moradas Quartas, cap. 1, p. 296.

The preceding extract is easy in comparison with other passages. Take the following :—

"Pues tornando à la Señal que digo, es la verdadera ; ya veyo esta alma que la ha hecho Dios bova del todo, para imprimir mejor en ella la verdadera Sabiduria, que ni vee, ni oye, ni entiende en el tiempo que està assi, que siempre es breve, y aun mas breve le parece à ella de lo que deve ser ; fixa Dios à se mesmo en lo interior de aquel alma de manera, que quando torne en si, en ninguna manera pueda dudar que estuve en Dios, y Dios en ella ; con tanta firmeza queda esta verdad, que aunque passassen años sin tornar le Dios à hazer aquella merced, no se le olvida, aun dexemos por los effetos con que queda, estos dirè despues—que esto es lo que haze mucho al caso. Pues direys me, como lo viò, ò como lo entendiò, sino vee, ni entiende? No digo que le viò entonces, sino que lo vee despues claro : y no porque es vision, sino una certidumbre que queda en el alma—que solo Dios la puede poner. Yo sè de una persona, que no abia llegado à su noticia, que estava Dios en todas las cosas por presencia ; y potencia, y essencia, y de una merced que le hizo Dios desta suerte lo vino à creer de manera, que aunque un medio letrado de los que tengo dicho, à quien frequento como està Dios en nosotros (y el lo sabia tan poco, como ella antes que Dios se lo diesse à entender) le dixo, que no estava mas de por gracia, ella tenia tan fixa la verdad—que no le creyo, y preguntòlo à otros que le dixeron la verdad, con que se consolò mucho," &c.—Moradas Quintas, cap. 1, p. 324.

These two extracts will, I think, be sufficient to give the reader who understands the language an idea of St. Teresa's style. Independent of the assistance she received from above, the Saint was *by nature* gifted with unusual endowments. Her style, however, is somewhat *diffuse*, and her sentences are often very long, and interrupted by frequent parentheses, which sometimes obscure the sense. Being continually occupied by so much busi-

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ness, she had no time to review and correct what she wrote; and this circumstance increases our admiration of the clearness and purity, as well as majesty and dignity, with which all her works are written. Even the *most learned* may derive wisdom from them. Spain may well be proud of such a writer. The manuscripts of several of her books are still preserved, with the greatest care and veneration, in the royal library of the Escurial.

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LETTERS.

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PREFACE.

After the "Interior Castle" had been printed, the worthy publisher of this translation suggested, that it would add much to the value and interest of the volume, were some of the "Letters" of the saint to be translated and published at the end of the book. With this request I have complied, intending, however, to translate the other valuable "Letters" of the saint, and publish them in a volume by themselves.

I am sure that the few now presented to the public—will be read with the deepest interest and delight. If volumes filled with the "Life and Correspondence" of great men be now so universally sought after, how ought we to prize the correspondence of Saint Teresa? All her biographers speak in the highest terms of her Letters.* Her correspondence was most extensive, including bishops, archbishops, kings, ladies of rank, gentlemen of the world, abbots, priors, nuncios, her confessors, her brothers and

* S. Antonio thus speaks of them:—"Giocondissima ella è la lesione di esse. Vi si sporge l' anima generoso di Teresa, una mente fra tanti travagli, infermità, e affari—semper limpida e vivace . . . In somma, quand' anche non avessimo scrittori della di lei Vita, o opere da esse composte, io son d' avviso che dalle sole Epistole della santa potrebbe ravvisarsi non poco dell' eccelso di lei carattere ne' doni non meno della grazia, che della natura."—Vita di Santa Teresa, tom. iv. p. 454.

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sisters, rectors of colleges, father provincials of the Society of Jesus, nuns and superiors of her convents and monasteries, learned doctors of different religious orders, and even most eminent saints, such as St. John of the Cross, and St. Peter of Alcantara, &c. There are also valuable Letters on the Degrees of Supernatural Prayer, on the Duties of Religious, on the Contempt of the World, &c.

In these letters, it seems to me that the real character of the saint can be seen *more clearly*, than in any of her other works. When we read her "Life," or "The Interior Castle," one is at first inclined to imagine that the saint was altogether *unearthly*, unfit for the cares and troubles of life; that all her time must have been spent in holding sweet converse with her Beloved, and sighing for the hour when she should be united with Him; that visions and raptures must have engrossed all her thoughts, and all the powers of her soul. Others again might fancy, that the saint must have been very grave, austere, solemn, and exceedingly scrupulous, as well as given to melancholy; while many more would be inclined to believe that she was quite an enthusiastic,* led away by the ardent temperament of her character, or the vagaries of her unsteady imagination. But how quickly are such erroneous ideas scattered when we read her letters! They soon convince us that the saint possessed what we call "common sense," in a most remarkable manner; that so far from being an enthusiast, she was endowed

* A high Puseyite paper, in reviewing the "Life" of the Saint, actually asserted that there were "many points of resemblance between St. Teresa and John Wesley and Joanna Southcote"!!

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with a solidity of judgment, and a prudence in all her actions, which won the admiration of every one; that she was so careful to guard against melancholy, as *never* to allow any one to enter the order who seemed the least infected with it; that as regards herself, we shall see that she was cheerfulness itself, even in the midst of her greatest trials, and withal exceedingly witty, lively, and jocose: indeed, her naïveté is one of the greatest charms of her letters. These will show us too, that her raptures and visions did not in the least interfere with her ordinary duties. She was an excellent—most admirable "woman of business:" and what important business was intrusted to her management! What tact, what judgment, what skill did she not display! The bishop of Osma* remarks, "That it was principally by her letters the saint was enabled to effect the reform of her order."

A translation of *all* the saint's letters has never been published in English. Abraham Woodhead translated only a few, which are appended to the second part of her works, translated by that illustrious convert. L'Abbé Pelicot published a translation of several of the letters in French, 1660; and a second volume appeared in 1696, at Lille, translated by Pierre de la Mère de Dieu. I have not seen either of these works. D'Andilly also published a translation of many of the letters; but on the whole, the translation is not a faithful one; and being a

* This celebrated bishop—Juan de Palafox y Mendoza—was enthusiastically devoted to Saint Teresa. He wrote an admirable critique on the Saint's epistles, in a letter addressed to Padre Diego de la Visitacion. (See tom. i. Spanish ed. Madrid, 1793.)

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Jansenist, he cannot be trusted.* In 1753, appeared another translation from the pen of Chappe de Ligni, a French lawyer. The translation is both faithful and elegant. But this was excelled by another translation made by Mère de la Maupeou, superioress of the Carmelite Convent of Saint Denis at Paris. She seems to have been perfectly acquainted both with French and Spanish. The translation did not appear till 1748. Dom la Taste has adorned it with a valuable preface and many useful notes, besides arranging the letters in chronological order, as far as could be done with certainty. The saint very often does not mention the date of her letters, nor the place whence she writes. The dates of the present "letters," I have taken both from Bishop Palafox and the French translation. As they only comprise a "selection," I have not observed the chronological order; but in the next volume I hope to be able to do so.

L'Abbé Migne, to whom we are indebted for the translation of so many valuable works, follows Chappe de Ligni and Madame de Maupeou, though he gives the preference to the latter, in his edition† of the saint's letters. Some of the letters were never published before.

The Spanish edition which I have made use of, is that of Madrid, 1793. It is in four thick volumes, the first volume being illustrated by the valuable,

* The *Univers* lately announced that a new translation, which is to supersede that of D'Andilly's, was about to be made by a Jesuit father, named Bouix.

† See "Œuvres très-complètes de Sainte Thérèse," tom. ii. Paris, 1840.

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though somewhat diffuse, notes of the illustrious Señor Don Juan de Palafox. But as his lordship did not live to complete his labours, the other volumes contain the notes of a Carmelite father, named Antonio de San Joseph. Vol. IV. contains several fragments of the saint's letters. Several valuable letters have unfortunately been lost. The Bollandists mention that St. John of the Cross, when he was so grievously persecuted on account of the saint, destroyed a great many. Most of the autograph letters are preserved with the greatest veneration at Seville, Valladolid, and Madrid. Many are also preserved in Belgium. I am not aware that there are any in England. In Appendix No. I. I have given two of the letters in the original. I found more difficulty in translating the letters than I thought I should. I shall feel grateful to be corrected.

J. DALTON.

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LETTERS.

No. I.

To Philip II. King of Spain.

[The Saint implores the protection of his Majesty against certain individuals who were endeavouring to injure the character of Father Gracian, and also to prevent the reformation of the order. The persecution was raised in Seville. The date of the letter is about the year 1577. It is remarkable for the zeal and pious boldness with which the Saint addresses so illustrious a monarch.]

JESUS. The grace of the holy Spirit be ever with your Majesty. Amen.

I have heard that a memorial has been presented to your Majesty against the Rev. Father Gracian. This stratagem of the devil and his ministers has indeed terrified me, because not content with defaming the character of this servant of God (and he is truly such, for he gives great edification to all of us: and whenever he visits our monasteries, I am informed that he always fills the religious with renewed fervour), his enemies are now striving to injure those houses in which our Lord is so devoutly served.

For this purpose they have made use of two Carmelite Friars; one of whom was a servant in our monastery, before he took the habit: but he committed himself in such a way more than once, as plainly to show us he possessed but little judgment. The others who are opposed to Father Gracian (because he has the power of punishing them)—have induced these Carmelites to sign such foolish charges against the nuns, that I should certainly laugh at them, were I not fearful, lest the devil might be able

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to draw some evil from them. Such accusations, if true, would be monstrous, considering the habit we wear.

I beseech your Majesty, then, for the love of God, not to allow such scandalous charges to be made before a court of justice, because, should we give an occasion, the world might be inclined to believe we had done something evil, even though our innocence should be proved.

The reformation of the order, hitherto so blessed by the divine goodness, might be seriously injured by the least stain. Your Majesty would be able to form a judgment in the matter, should you be pleased to read the attestation which Father Gracian has thought proper to draw up, respecting these monasteries. It includes the testimony of those who have communication with the nuns, and they are persons of great weight and holiness.

Moreover, since the motive by which those are influenced who have written the memorial can easily be discovered, I beseech your Majesty to examine the matter, because the honour and glory of God are concerned; for if our enemies should see that some attention is paid to their charges, they will not hesitate, in order to prevent a visitation, to accuse as a heretic whoever shall undertake to make it: and this would not be difficult to do, where there is no fear of God.

I quite sympathise with the sufferings of this servant of God, which he endures with such patience and perfection; and this induces me to beseech your Majesty, either to take him under your protection, or to remove the cause of these dangers, for he belongs to a family that is extremely attached to your Majesty: independent of this consideration, he has great merits of his own. I consider him to be a man sent by God, and our blessed Lady, for whom he has such a tender devotion. Our Lord conducted him to our order, that he might be of assistance to me:

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for as I have now laboured alone for more than seventeen years, my weak health will not allow me to endure much more.

I beg of your Majesty to pardon me for having entered so much into these particulars: but the great respect which I have for your Majesty, emboldened me to do so; for I considered that as our Lord endured my indiscreet complaints, so also would your Majesty. May God be pleased to hear all the prayers of the religious, both men and women, that your Majesty may have a long life; for we have no other protector on earth.

I remain, your Majesty's unworthy Servant and Subject,

TERESA DE JESUS.

No. II.

To the most illustrious Lady Louisa de la Cerda, of Malagon.

[The Saint gives the lady an account of the state of her health, and asks her co-operation in a new foundation. The date is 1568.]

JESUS BE WITH YOU, MADAM. I have neither time nor strength to write a long letter, for now I write to few persons: it is, however, not very long ago since I wrote to your ladyship. My health has altogether failed me. I found myself much better when I was residing with you, although the people here are attached to me—praise be to God. But as I am with you in affection, so I desire to be in body also.

Are you not astonished, madam, to see how sweetly our Lord conducts all things? Blessed be His name, for having been pleased to commit our interests into the hands of those, who are so devoted to His service; I think the undertaking will be very agreeable to His Majesty.

For the love of God, madam, endeavour to obtain

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leave. I think it best, however, my name should not be mentioned to the Governor; but only that he be requested to allow a house of Carmelite Nuns to be established. He should also be informed, what great good these religious do, wherever they are placed (at least, this may be said with truth of the nuns at Malagon: praise be to God for it).

When permission has been obtained, your ladyship will see how soon I shall be with you: our Lord seems unwilling that we should be separated. May his Majesty be pleased to unite us together in (eternal) glory, together with all my superiors, to whose prayers I constantly recommended myself. Write and tell me how your ladyship is: you are very negligent in doing me this favour.

The sisters send their most respectful regards to you. You cannot imagine how many indulgences we have obtained for the benefactors of this order: they are innumerable.

May our Lord be with your ladyship.

Your Ladyship's unworthy Servant,

TERESA DE JESUS, *Carmelite.*

No. III.

To the most illustrious Lady Anne Henriquez, of Toro.

[The Saint expresses her great desire to see this lady, and praises two of the nuns, &c. The date is 1574.]

JESUS. The grace of the Holy Spirit be ever with your ladyship.

It gave me great comfort to find your ladyship in this place.* I do not regret the journey, as I now have more leisure to enjoy your company than I had

* At Valladolid.

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at Salamanca. I have not deserved this favour from our Lord: may He be for ever praised. The prioress is quite well and happy; she is much better than I am, and she is also exceedingly devoted to your ladyship.

I was much pleased on hearing that you have been entertaining Father Baltasar Alvarez* for a few days, for he requires some repose from his numerous labours. Our Lord be praised for giving you better health than usual. Mine is better now than it has been for several years past, and this is saying a great deal, considering the season of the year.

I have found such pure souls in this house, that I have praised our Lord for such a blessing. I consider Sister Stephanie to be a saint, and I feel great pleasure in beholding the merits of Sister Casilda, and the favours which our Lord bestows upon her ever since she put on the habit. May our Lord advance them more and more in perfection, for we should esteem those souls highly, whom he chooses so early for Himself.

I cannot help admiring the simplicity of Sister Stephanie in everything relating to God, when I consider the wisdom and truth of her words. The Father Provincial has made the visitation of this house,† and the election has taken place. The prioress has been unanimously re-elected. One of the sisters of St. Joseph's of Avila has been chosen sub-prioress; she takes the name of Antonia of the Holy Spirit. Lady Guiomar is acquainted with her; she is a very devout soul.

The foundation of Zamora has been deferred, at least for the present, and I am on the point of resuming my long journey. I intend to pass through your place, in order to have the pleasure of paying my respects to your ladyship. It is now some time since I received a letter from my Father Baltasar

* One of the Saint's confessors.

† The convent at Valladolid.

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Alvarez; neither have I written to him, not however through any desire of mortification, for I never profited by his advice as I ought to have done. But you cannot conceive what difficulty I have in writing these letters; even when they are for my own pleasure, I can never find time. Blessed be God, whom we hope to enjoy in security for ever; for upon nothing can we rely in this world, with all its trials and changes. I live with the hope of arriving at this end; people say "it is amidst sufferings," but I find none.

The mother prioress compliments me on my charge; he appears in *her* eyes to be as charming a child* as he does in mine. I beseech our Lord to make him a great saint. Do not forget to give my respects to your husband, and the same also to Don Juan Antonio: I often recommend them to our Lord. Do not, madam, for the love of God, forget me in your prayers, for I always stand in need of them. As you remark, there is no occasion for us to trouble ourselves about Lady Guiomar, and so she tells me herself in stronger words. I should be glad to hear some beginning has been made towards so good a work. I wish to know what it is, and to enjoy the same delight that you feel. May our Lord give your ladyship abundance of joy during this feast, as great as I pray you may have.

To-day being the feast of St. Thomas, Father Dominic (Bañez)† gave us a sermon, in which he so highly extolled the merits of suffering, that I felt a great desire to endure many, and I requested of our Lord to give me some for the future. The father's sermons give me very great pleasure. He has been chosen prior. I do not know if his election will be confirmed. He has been so much engaged, that I

* It seems that the Saint had a son of this lady under her protection.

† Another of the Saint's holy confessors.

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have enjoyed but little of his company; however, I shall be content, if I can enjoy *yours* as long.

May our Lord direct your ladyship, and give you such health and rest as may be necessary for arriving at that happiness which has no end.

Your Ladyship's unworthy Servant,

TERESA DE JESUS.

No. IV.

To the Reverend Father Louis of Granada, of the Order of St. Dominic.

[The Saint expresses an ardent desire to see this great man, and recommends herself to his prayers. Date, 1577.]

THE grace of the Holy Spirit be ever with your Reverence. Amen.

I consider myself as one among that great number of persons who love your Reverence in the Lord, for having written such holy and useful works, and who give thanks to His Majesty for having made you instrumental in the good of so many souls. I think no difficulty would prevent me from going to hear the words of one who consoles me so much by his writings, did not my sex and state of life put an obstacle in the way.

But independent of this consideration, I am obliged to seek for persons like you to calm the fears in which I have now lived for some years. And though I have not deserved this favour, I have been consoled by the command I have received from His Grace Don Teutonio,* to address this letter to you; this I should not have presumed to do of myself. But the confidence which I place in

* Don Teutonio de Braganza was Archbishop of Evora.

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obedience, induces me to hope in our Lord, that your Reverence will sometimes remember me in your prayers. I stand in great need of them, both because I have little merit of myself, and because I am exposed to the eyes of the world, without being in any way able to justify the good opinion which people have of me.

If your Reverence knew how I was situated, you would then be induced to grant me this favour, which I ask as an alms. You who know so well the Majesty of God, can easily imagine how great must be the sufferings of one, who has led such a wicked life as I have. But though so wicked, I have often presumed to ask of our Lord to give your Reverence a long life. May His Majesty grant me this favour, and may your Reverence increase more and more in holiness and divine love.

Your Reverence's unworthy Servant,

TERESA DE JESUS, *Carmelitę.*

P.S.—Don Teutonio is one of those who are deceived in their opinion of me. He tells me that he esteems your Reverence highly. In return, your Reverence should visit his Grace, and tell him not to be so credulous without cause.

No. V.

*To the Reverend Father Pedro Ibañez.**

[The Saint having written her "Life" by the command of this her holy Director, sent him the manuscript with the following letter. The date is about 1562.]

JESUS. The Holy Ghost be always with your Reverence. Amen.

It would not be amiss, in writing to your Reverence,

* The Saint speaks in the highest terms of this holy religious,

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to dwell on this service of mine, in order to oblige you the more to take particular care in recommending me to God. And this I could well do, seeing it has cost me so dear to behold myself in writing, and thus to have brought to my remembrance so many of my miseries, though I can with truth say, that I have experienced more reluctance in mentioning the favours which our Lord has shown me, than I should have felt in mentioning the offences I have committed against His Majesty.

I have done what your Reverence commanded me, to enter into more particulars; but upon this condition, that your Reverence also will perform what you promised me, viz., to tear out whatever you do not approve. When your Reverence sent for the manuscript, I had not finished the perusal of it after having written it. Hence you may find some things not very clearly explained, and others mentioned twice over; for the time I had was so short, that I could not review what I had written. I beseech your Reverence to correct it, and order it to be transcribed, if it must be sent to Father Avila, otherwise some one may know my hand.

I am very desirous such orders may be given, as he thinks proper, since it is with this intention I began to write. If he shall judge I am going on in a safe way, this will give me great consolation, for there will be no more to do on my part. Your Reverence must do whatever you think best; consider how bound you are to one who thus confides her soul to you. *Your* soul I will recommend to our Lord all the days of my life; make haste, then, to serve His Majesty, in order to be able to do me this favour, for your Reverence will see, by what is now sent you, how well you are employed in giving yourself wholly to Him (as your Reverence has already

who belonged to the order of St. Dominic. He was of the greatest assistance to her in the foundation of St. Joseph's monastery. (See her "Life," chap. xxxviii. p. 364.)

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begun so to do) who gives Himself to us without reserve. May He be blessed for ever: I hope in His mercy, that both your Reverence and myself may one day meet together in that kingdom, where we shall more clearly understand the great favours He has been pleased to show us both, and praise Him for ever and ever. Amen.

Your Reverence's unworthy Servant,

TERESA DE JESUS.

No. VI.

To the Reverend Father John de Jesu Roca, Carmelite, at Pastrana.

[The Saint having been imprisoned by the decree of a general chapter, shows in this letter the greatest patience and joy in sufferings. Date, 1579.]

JESUS. Mary and Joseph be in the soul of my father John de Jesu.

I received your Reverence's letter in this prison, where I am now filled with the greatest delight, because I endure all my troubles for my God and for my order. That which grieves me, my father, is the affliction your Reverence feels for me; this it is that troubles me. Do not, however, my son, be troubled, nor any one else, since I may say, like another Paul, though not his equal in sanctity, That prisons, labours, persecutions, torments, ignominies, and insults for my Saviour,* and for my order, are to me delights and favours.

I never knew myself to be more free from troubles than I am now. It belongs to God to help the afflicted and imprisoned with His favour and

* Spanish "Por mi Christo."

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assistance. I give my God a thousand thanks; and it is proper we should all thank Him for the favour He has done me by this imprisonment. My son and father, can there be a greater delight or sweetness, than in suffering for our good God? When were the saints at the height of their joy, but when they were suffering for their God and Saviour? This is the most secure and certain path that leads to God, since the cross should be our joy and delight. Let us, then, my father, seek the cross; let us desire the cross; let us embrace afflictions; and whenever we have none, woe to the Carmelite order, woe to us.

You tell me in your letter how the Nuncio has given orders, "That no more convents of our order should be founded, and that those already erected must be taken down, by the request of the father general." You also mention that the Nuncio is exceedingly angry against me, and considers me a troublesome woman, and of a roving disposition;* that the world is in arms against me and my sons, who hide themselves in the rocks of the mountains, and the most retired places, in order not to be found and taken. This is what I lament—what I feel—what grieves me, that for such a sinner and wicked nun as I am, my sons should endure so many persecutions and afflictions, and should be abandoned by all men; but not by *God;* for of this I am certain, He will not forsake us, nor abandon those who love Him so tenderly.

But in order that you, my son, and the rest of your brothers may rejoice, I will tell you something very consoling; but this must be in confidence between myself, your reverence, and Father Mariano; for I should be grieved if others knew it. You must know then, my father, how a certain nun† of this house, being in prayer on the vigil of the feast of my Father St. Joseph, he appeared to her in company

* "Llamandome muger inquieta, y andariega," &c.

† The Saint no doubt alludes to herself.

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with the Blessed Virgin and her Son; and she noticed how they stood, asking for the reformation (of the order); and our Lord told her, "that many both in hell and on earth rejoiced greatly to see, as they supposed, the order dissolved; but that when the Nuncio commanded its dissolution, God confirmed it." He told her to have recourse to the king,* who in everything would be to her and her sons as a father. Our Lady and St. Joseph said the same, and several other things not fit to be mentioned in a letter. She was also told that within twenty days I should be delivered from prison, God so willing. Let us then all rejoice, for from this day forward the reform will continue to advance more and more.

What your Reverence should do is, to continue in the house of Madame Maria de Mendoza till you hear again from me; and Father Mariano must go and present this letter to the king, and another to the duchess of Pastrana. I hope your Reverence will not leave the house, lest you might be apprehended, for we shall soon see ourselves at liberty.

I am well and strong, thanks be to God. My companion is displeased. Recommend us to God, and say a mass of thanksgiving in honour of my Father St. Joseph. Do not write to me till I tell you. May God make you a holy and perfect Carmelite.

Father Mariano advises your Reverence and Father Jerome de la Madre de Dios, to consult in secret the duke del Infantado.

TERESA DE JESUS.

Wednesday, 25th of March, 1579.

* King Philip II. of Spain.

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No. VII.

*To the most illustrious Don Alonso Velasquez, bishop of Osma.**

[The Saint gives his Lordship an account of the state of her soul. He was then her confessor at Toledo. Date, 1581.]

JESUS. O! that I could make your Reverence understand the quiet and tranquillity which my soul now enjoys. She is now so certain she is to enjoy God, that He seems already to have given her the possession, though not the enjoyment of Him. It is as if some one had, by a legal deed, settled a great estate upon another, so that he should have possession of it after a certain period, and receive the rents; but till then, he was to enjoy only the reversion then made over to him.

But through the gratitude he feels for the donor, he does not wish to enjoy the estate now, because he thinks he does not deserve it, but only to serve Him, even though it were by much suffering. He sometimes even thinks this were but little, though his afflictions should last till the end of the world, provided he could be of service to the giver of this possession; for in truth, such a person is not, in this respect, subject to the miseries of the world, as he used to be formerly, because though he endures more, it seems to be only outwardly; for the soul is as it were in a castle with sovereign power, and thus she does not lose her peace.

And yet this security does not exclude the great fear she has of offending God, and of removing everything which might prevent her from serving Him: it even increases her fear and care. But so

* St. Teresa, in the book of her Foundations, highly extols this great prelate, both for his learning and piety. When she consulted him as her confessor, he was a canon of the cathedral of Toledo. (See "Foundation of the Monastery of Soria.")

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unmindful is she of her own interest, that she seems in part to have lost her very being, so forgetful is she of herself. In everything she looks to God's glory, and how to accomplish His will the best, and glorify Him.

Besides what I have just mentioned, then again, as far as regards her body and health, I think she takes more care of it, and is less mortified in eating; neither has she such desires of doing penance, as she used to have. But in her opinion, all tends to this object, viz., to be able to serve God the more in other things; for she often offers Him, as an agreeable sacrifice, this care she takes of the body: often is she fatigued, and yet sometimes she tries herself in some mortification; but in her opinion, she cannot do this without injury to her health; and the commands of her superiors are always before her. Self-love no doubt insinuates itself in this, and in her desires also about her health. But I think it would give me more pleasure, and I received more, when I was able to endure great mortifications; because if I suffered, then I was doing something and giving good example, and I was not troubled with the thought that I was not serving God in anything. Your Lordship well knows what is best to be done in this respect.

The "Imaginary Visions"* have ceased, but the intellectual vision of the three Persons and of the Humanity, seems always to be present; this, in my opinion, is much more sublime. Now I seem to understand, that the visions I have had came from God, because they dispose the soul to the state in which she now is. And as she was so weak and so miserable, God went on conducting her as He thought necessary: I consider they are to be valued exceedingly, when they are from God.

The "Internal Speeches" have not gone, for when

* The Saint explains this kind of visions in her "Interior Castle."

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there is any necessity, our Lord gives me some advice: here in Palentia a great oversight would have been committed, though not sinful, had it not been for such advice.

The "Acts and Desires" do not seem to have so much power in me as formerly, because though they are great, yet *that* is so much greater which possesses me, viz., that the will of God may be done, and whatever conduces most to His glory; and as the soul knows well that His Majesty understands what is the most proper for this object, and as she takes no pleasure in her own interest, these "acts and desires" immediately cease, and I think have no power whatever. Hence proceeds the fear I sometimes have (though not as I used to have it, with pain and trouble), so that my soul is, as it were, stupified, and I seem to be doing nothing, because I cannot do any penance. Desires of suffering and of martyrdom, and of seeing God, have no great power over me, and in general I cannot accomplish them. It seems as if I lived only to eat and to sleep, and to suffer no pain in anything; and even this troubles me, except that sometimes (as I have said) I fear it is a delusion; yet I cannot believe it, for as far as I can understand, no attachment to any creature, nor to all the glory of heaven, reigns with any power over me, except only to love my God. This is not diminished, nay, rather in my opinion it is increased, as well as the desire that all should serve Him.

Notwithstanding this, one thing astonishes me, viz., that now I feel so little those excessive and interior sentiments that used to afflict me, through beholding the loss of souls, and of thinking whether any offence against God had been committed, although I think this desire that God should not be offended is not lessened.

Your Lordship must observe, that I can do no more in whatever I either now have, or that is past; nor is it in my power to serve more, if I could, were I

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not so wicked: *more* I say, since if now I should earnestly endeavour to desire to die, I could not desire such a thing, nor perform the acts that I used to do; nor have I such sorrow for offences against God, nor likewise those great fears I had for so many years, when I thought I was deluded; hence, I now have no occasion to consult the learned, or to tell anything to any one. I only wish to satisfy myself whether I am going on well at present, and whether I can do anything better. I have spoken on this matter with some whom I consulted about other things, viz., Father Dominic (Bañez) and Maestro Medina, and some belonging to the Society of Jesus. I am resolved to agree to whatever your Lordship shall now say to me, on account of your Lordship's great authority: weigh your words well for the love of God. I have lately been unable to know whether the souls of some relatives of mine who have died have gone to heaven; but of others, I have not lost the knowledge.

An interior peace, and the little strength which either pleasures or displeasures have to remove this presence (during the time it lasts) of the three Persons, and that without power to doubt of it, continue in such a manner, that I clearly seem to experience what St. John says, "That He will dwell in the soul," and this not only by grace, but that He will also make her perceive this presence, which brings so many good things as cannot be uttered, especially that there is no occasion to seek considerations for knowing, that God is in the soul. This is almost general, except when she is oppressed by severe sickness: sometimes it seems as if God wished her to suffer without any internal consolation; but never, not even through any first motion, does this turn the will from desiring that *God's will* should not be accomplished in her. Her resignation to this will has such strength, that she desires neither death nor life, except for a short time, when she desires to

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see God; but the presence of these three Persons is immediately represented to her with such power, that thereby her grief for being at a distance from her Spouse is diminished, and a desire to live remains, if such be His will, in order to serve Him the more, and that she may be instrumental in causing at least one soul to love Him the more, and praise Him through her means; and though this should be only for a very short time, she thinks it would be more profitable to her, than to enjoy eternal glory.

Your Lordship's unworthy Servant and Daughter,

TERESA DE JESUS.

No. VIII.

To the Reverend Father Gonzalo de Avila, of the Society of Jesus.

[This holy man was confessor to the Saint, and rector of a college at Avila. He seems to have asked her for some advice respecting his office. Date, 1578.]

JESUS be with your Reverence.

It is a long time since I have been so mortified as I was to-day, with the letter I received from your Reverence. I am not yet so humble as to desire to be considered so proud, nor is your Reverence so anxious to show your humility, so much to my cost. I never felt so much inclined to tear your letter. I assure your Reverence, you know well how to mortify me and make me understand what I am: does your Reverence imagine, then, that I consider myself able to instruct others? God deliver me from such a thought! I do not wish to think of such a thing. Now I perceive I have committed a fault, though it may perhaps be out of a desire I have to see your

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Reverence very good; and from such a weakness may proceed the follies of my discourse with you, and also from the great respect I have for you, which makes me speak with freedom, without considering what I say. Afterwards, I had some scruple respecting certain things I said to you; and if I were not afraid, too, of being disobedient, I should not now comply with what your Reverence commands me, because I find great reluctance in doing so. May God accept my submission. Amen.

One of the great defects which I have, is judging of myself in these matters of prayer, and therefore your Reverence must not heed what I shall say, because God may give *you* another talent, different from that He gives to a weak woman like myself. Considering the favour bestowed on me by our Lord, of having Him actually present to me; and how, in addition to this I see, when many duties are to be performed by me, that neither persecutions, nor labours, can disturb me so much as these* do; if any business comes which requires immediate despatch, I very commonly go to rest an hour or two, or even later, after midnight, in order that my soul may not afterwards be obliged to attend to any other thought save to Him only whom she possesses thus present. This has been very injurious to my health, and therefore it must be a temptation, though it seems to me the soul remains more at liberty, like one who has on his hands some business of great importance and urgency; and so He immediately settles anything else, that it may not hinder him from attending to that which he considers more necessary.

And so it is a great pleasure to me, whenever I can leave anything to be done by the sisters, though it might in some degree be done better by myself; but should I not do it well, His Majesty supplies the deficiency. The less attention I give to business, the

* That is, her duties.

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more advanced I find myself in my interior. Though I know this very clearly, yet I often neglect using care to be released from business, and doubtless I receive some harm thereby. I see I might do more, and employ greater diligence in this respect, and thus do myself greater good.

What I say, however, must not be understood of weighty affairs, which cannot be neglected; and here, perhaps, lies my mistake, for such are the duties of your Reverence; and it would not be proper to leave them to the management of another, in my opinion; but as I see your Reverence's health is injured by them, I wish you could have less to do. I am, however, excited to bless God, by seeing you take such an interest in matters relating to the welfare of the house, for I am not so weak as not to understand the great favour our Lord bestowed upon you, in having given you such a talent, and the great merit which may be gained thereby. It makes me somewhat envious, because I wish my superior also to have the like. Since God has given your Reverence to me as such, I wish you would take as much care of my soul as you do of the fountain. I am much pleased with your account of it, for it is so necessary in the monastery, that it deserves all your Reverence can do.

Nothing more remains for me to say. I assure you, I speak to you in all truth and sincerity, as if I were speaking to God. I know that whatever is done towards properly discharging the office of superior is so pleasing to God, that He gives in a short time what He would give to other superiors, only after a long period. This I know as well by experience, as by what I have been saying. But as I see your Reverence is so exceedingly busy in general, what I have said to you came at once into my mind, and the more I reflect upon it, the more (as I have said) do I now see, that there is a difference between your Reverence and myself. I will correct myself by

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not mentioning my first thoughts, since it cost me so dear. Provided I can see you well, my temptation will cease. May our Lord dispose everything as He can, and as I desire.

Your Reverence's Servant,

TERESA DE JESUS.

No. IX.

To the Most Illustrious Lord Don Teutonio de Braganza, afterwards Archbishop of Evora, at Salamanca.

[The Saint gives this great prelate some excellent advice, thanks him for some alms he had sent her, and recommends to him the establishment of a new house of Carmelites. Date, 1574.]

JESUS. The Grace of the Holy Spirit be ever with your Lordship.

I received very great pleasure on hearing of your safe arrival, and the good state of your Lordship's health; but your letter seemed to me too short for so long a journey, and your Lordship does not tell me the reason why you did not let me know, if you succeeded in the affair on which you went. It will be no new thing that your Lordship is not satisfied with yourself; but wonder not if the labour of the journey, which prevented you from having your hours regulated, has caused some tepidity in your soul. But you will be yourself again, when you resume your usual quiet. I have at present some little health, in comparison with the severe sickness I have lately had; and if I should complain as you do, you would consider your pains as nothing. The sickness I had during two months was so violent, that I felt it even in my interior, so as to make me

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think I had no existence. At present I am well as regards the interior, but as to the exterior, I still suffer my usual infirmities. I am treated well by the orders of your lordship, and I pray God to reward you for it. The people have shown great kindness to me and some other religious, who have come very ill from Pastrana: the sickness was occasioned by the dampness of their house. They are now getting better: they are very devout souls, with whom your lordship will be much pleased to converse, but principally with the prioress.

I had before heard of the death of the king of France.* I am grieved at the thought of seeing so many evils which will follow from it, and the souls which the devil will gain. I pray God to send a remedy; at least, if our prayers can be of any assistance, we do not forget to beseech His Majesty (in favour of them). I entreat Him to reward *you* also for all your care, and the many favours you have done our Order. The father provincial (I mean the father visitor) is so far off, that I cannot by a letter transact this business with him, about which you spoke to me. It would be a good thing to build a house here for our fathers, if the devil does not prevent it, for this reason. The favour which you wish to do us will contribute not a little to this establishment, together with the circumstance of the visitors being confirmed, without any limitation of time. I believe that, for certain reasons, they have been confirmed with greater authority than they had formerly. They may now even found convents; so that I trust in our Lord He will prosper this business. Do not abandon it, I beseech you. I believe the father visitor will soon come near us: I will then write to him. They assure me he will come here. Your lordship will do me the favour to speak to

* Charles IX., who died in 1574. After the death of this monarch, Protestantism began to gain ground in France, and it is to this evil no doubt that the Saint alludes.

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him, and tell him what you think of everything: you may speak to him with perfect freedom, for he is a truly good man, and he deserves to be treated in this candid way; and perhaps he may resolve to finish the affair, in consideration of you. I beg of you not to despair until you know what he intends doing. Mother prioress recommends herself to your lordship's prayers. All our nuns have ever been careful, and are so still, to pray for you. Our sisters of Medina, and every one who wishes to confer a favour on me, do the same.

Our father rector's bad health afflicts me much. I pray God it may be better, and that He will bestow on you the grace and sanctity I desire for you. Amen. Please to inform the father rector how anxious we are to beg of our Lord to give him his health, and that I am well satisfied with Father Santander. But it is quite otherwise with the religious who are our neighbours; they have gone to law against us, because we have bought a house which suited our purpose, and which is near to theirs. I do not know how the matter will end.

Your Lordship's unworthy Servant,

TERESA DE JESUS.

No. X.

To the most illustrious Lord Don Teutonio de Braganza, Archbishop of Evora.

[Letter 2nd. The Saint congratulates this prelate on being made archbishop, and gives him advice and encouragement. She also mentions the different persecutions which she and her religious were suffering, and the obstacles that were raised to prevent the reform of the order, &c. Date, 1578.]

JESUS. The grace of the Holy Spirit be ever with your illustrious Lordship. Amen.

It is now more than two months since I received

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a letter from your lordship. I should have answered it immediately, but the reason which obliged me to defer the answer was, that I waited till I saw if some calm would follow the great troubles which have agitated both our nuns and fathers, ever since the month of August; I was also desirous of giving your lordship an account of all that passed, according to the command you gave me in your letter. But matters are getting worse and worse every day, as I shall inform your lordship in the course of this letter. The only thing I now wish for is to be able to converse with your lordship, as I cannot express in a letter the joy I felt by the letter which the Father Rector sent me this week from your lordship, though it is more than three weeks since I learnt the news from yourself with more certainty: since then I have been informed from another quarter. I know not how your lordship can imagine that such a thing can be kept secret. May His divine Majesty grant it may tend to His greater honour and glory, and that it may be the means of making your lordship advance more and more in sanctity, as indeed I think it will.

Be assured, my lord, that a matter which is so strongly recommended to God, by souls who have no other object but that He may be served in whatever they request, will not fail to be heard. As regards myself, though I am so wicked, I do not forget to be very assiduous in praying for your lordship, and your servants* in all our houses do the same: here I daily find such souls, the piety of whom covers me with great confusion. It seems our Lord is pleased to choose them from those parts in order to bring them to these houses, in which I know not who could have given them any knowledge of our monasteries or mode of living.

Hence, my lord, you must take courage, and doubt not for a moment it is God's will. I have not the

* That is, the nuns.

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least doubt myself; nay, I am even sure that this has been ordered by God, and that His Majesty wishes you should now put in execution the good desires you have of serving Him. You have remained unoccupied too long, and our Lord stands in need of a virtuous prelate. As for *us*, we can do but little, being so poor and so base, if God does not raise up some one to defend us, though we ask of Him nothing else than His holy service: for malice is raised to such a height, and ambition and vanity are so much encouraged,* even by those who ought to tread them under feet, that it seems our Lord, powerful as He is, wishes to make use of His creatures in order to maintain virtue, which without them would not be strong enough to gain the victory; for those who should in reality be her defenders have forsaken her; and thus our Lord has chosen other persons, who he knew would be able to help Him.

I hope your lordship will endeavour to employ yourself in this way, as I think you will: I pray that His Majesty will give you health, strength, and grace, that your lordship may prosper in everything. The service we shall do your lordship will be, continually to pray to God for you, that He may be pleased to give you a people desirous of the good of souls, in whom you may place trust. I am greatly consoled at knowing, that the Society of Jesus takes so much interest in your lordship's affairs that you can employ the fathers in any way you think best, since they are fit for everything.

I was very glad to hear how well the affair of the Marchioness of Elche succeeded. I was in great trouble about it, till I heard of its happy termination. God be praised for it. When our Lord sends us such a multitude of troubles together, He usually makes them serve for our greater good. As He

* "Tan canonizada," &c.

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knows we are exceedingly weak, and as He does all things for our welfare, He proportions our sufferings to our strength. I think the same will happen with regard to the storms raised up against us some time since. But if I did not know that both our fathers and sisters lived in the strict observance of their rule, I should sometimes fear that their enemies would accomplish the object they have been aiming at, viz., to ruin the commencement of the reform, which is supported by the most Blessed Virgin. The devil has used such artifices for this end, that it seems our Lord has given him leave to exert all his power in this affair.

Indeed, the stratagems and diligence which have been made use of to defame us, and especially Father Gracian and myself (I am the person against whom all their blows are directed), are so numerous, and the accusations against this good man have been so false, and the memorials which were presented against him to the king, as well as against the reform of the convents, were so scandalous, that to have *seen* them your lordship would have wondered how any one could have invented such malice. But I am persuaded that we gained much by them, because the nuns felt as much joy as if these calumnies did relate to them. The virtue of Father Gracian has shone with such brightness under the trial, that I am quite astonished. What a great treasure must not God have hidden in that soul, for he prays especially for those who calumniate him, and he bears their calumnies with as much joy as St. Jerome! He cannot, however, endure the false charges which our enemies have brought against the nuns. The visits which he has made amongst them for two years have given him so great a knowledge of their piety, that he not only considered them as angels in his own mind, but even *called* them so.

But God was at length pleased that these people should be forced to *unsay* what they had charged us

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with. And as to what was said respecting Father Gracian, the Court ordered an inquiry to be made, and evidence to be brought forward, and thus the truth was discovered. They have also retracted many other false charges, by which we have plainly seen how many enemies we had at court, and also how great was the hatred by which they were animated. Your lordship may be assured, that it was by this means the devil endeavoured to destroy all the good which is done by our houses.

But not to dwell on all that has been done against the poor nuns of the Monastery of the Incarnation, whose only crime was to have chosen me for their prioress, I must tell your lordship that the whole city was astonished at what they have suffered, and *do* suffer still, and are likely to suffer for some time; for I do not know how all will end. The severity with which Father Tostado treated them was so extraordinary, that once he kept them for more than fifty days without allowing them to hear mass, or even see any one! This severity still continues. Many people said that the nuns were excommunicated; but all the theologians of Avila denied this, and with reason, because the excommunication which did not then affect me, had been published only to prevent them from electing a stranger; and they thought they could not incur this excommunication by choosing *me*, because they could not consider me a stranger, one who had been professed in their house and who had lived so many years in it. And who in reality could hinder me now from returning there, if I had a wish to do so? My dowry was paid to that house; the convent is not in a separate province; and the prioress, however, has been chosen who had the less number of votes. The matter is in the hands of the council, and I know not how it will end.

I was much grieved to see so many troubles raised on my account; such great scandal given to the city,

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and so many souls filled with affliction, for the number of those who had been excommunicated was not less than fifty-four! The only consolation which was left me was the thought, that I had used every effort to prevent the nuns from electing me; and surely not without reason, for it would have been one of the greatest troubles to me, I assure your lordship, to have seen myself there as prioress,—in a house too, where I never had one hour's good health all the time I lived in it.

But though I have compassion on those souls whose heroic perfection has been made manifest, by the patience wherewith they have endured these persecutions: yet the affliction I now suffer, on account of Father Tostado having commanded, more than a month ago, two fathers who were their confessors to be imprisoned, is much more painful. They are both very perfect religious, and by their good example have edified the whole city during the five years they have lived in it. They it was who kept the house in the same state that I left it; and I can assure your lordship that one of them, called Brother John of the Cross, is considered by all to be a saint, and this opinion is not without a good foundation; in my judgment he is a great treasure. This holy man and his companion were sent to this monastery by the command of the apostolic visitor, who belonged to the Order of St. Dominic, and also by the present nuncio; they were also made subject to the Father Gracian, the visitor.

I do not know how this affair will end. My great trouble is, that they have been taken away without our knowing where they are. But we are afraid they are closely confined, and this makes me fearful lest some misfortune has happened. May our Lord send a remedy.

I hope your lordship will pardon me if this letter is too long. I feel a pleasure in acquainting your lordship with all that has happened, in case Father

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Tostado should come into your neighbourhood. When the nuncio came here, he favoured this father so much, that he commanded Father Gracian not to make his visitation, though this command does not prevent him from being apostolic commissary (because the nuncio did nothing to make it appear he took away that power, nor was it, according to what he himself said, his intention to take it from him). This good father went to Alcalá, and after that to Pastrana, where he has lived in a grotto, suffering a thousand persecutions, as I have before told your lordship; he does not exercise his power of apostolic commissary, for since that time he has lived as if he had been in reality suspended.

He earnestly desires never to exercise his power of making a visitation, and we desire it no less than he does, on account of the troubles which happen to him and us, unless our Lord would do us the favour of making a province for us in particular, it would not be for our good that he should be visitor. When he arrived at Alcalá, he wrote me word that he was resolved to obey Father Tostado, if he made the visitation, and he told us to do the same. But as he has not yet come into this neighbourhood, I believe our Lord will prevent his coming. All the fathers, however, say, that it is he who does everything, and that he employs all his power to be able to make the visitation. This it is, my lord, that afflicts us extremely, and is the cause of all the complaints we now make to you. But I feel a great relief in giving your lordship a history of these proceedings. I know, however, you must be tired with reading them; but your lordship is not insensible to the obligations you lie under of protecting this Order; and how necessary is it that your lordship should not only know the inconveniences attending a new foundation, but those also which I shall now mention: these will make another strange story.

As I cannot but make use of every possible means

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to prevent so good a work from miscarrying (for even the most learned men who are my confessors, do not advise me to the contrary), all our fathers are very angry with me; and they have sent such representations to the father general, that it has been decreed in a general Chapter, that by the command of our father general, no religious of the reform shall henceforth leave their convent, and they have laid this command on *me* in particular, under pain of excommunication: I am allowed, however, to choose any convent I like to live in. It is very evident that this decree has been made on purpose to prevent any more new foundations: it is painful to see such a multitude of young women who beg to be received into our monasteries, and yet they cannot be received because our houses are so few, and we are forbidden to found any more.

Though the late nuncio ordered me to continue the foundations, and I have very strong "letters patent" from the apostolic visitor; nevertheless, since these disturbances have happened, I have resolved not to establish any houses until our father general or the pope commands otherwise; for as this work has not been discontinued through my fault, I consider the opposition made against it as a favour from God, who thus frees me from a burthen, of which I already begin to be tired. I do not, however, mean to say, that if I could render some service to our Lord thereby, it would be a trouble to me: but what I say is, it would be so painful for me not to see your lordship any more, that if it were but for this reason alone I was commanded to keep enclosure, I should be quite inconsolable. But even though the general chapter should put no obstacle in the way, I could not go, because the leave I obtained from our father general extended only to the kingdom of Castile, and hence it would be necessary to receive new letters patent. I am certain our father general would not grant them now; but it

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would be very easy to obtain them from the pope, especially if his holiness could see the document drawn up by the command of Father Gracian: this gives an account of our manner of living in these monasteries; of the life we lead, and of the great good which the religious do wherever they are established. It is said by persons of authority, that this document, of itself, is sufficient to canonize us all! I have not yet read it, because so many good things are said about myself. However, if this foundation is to be made, I am very anxious that leave should be obtained from our father general, with a request that we may be allowed to establish houses in Spain: my presence would not be necessary, for religious could easily be found very capable of doing this work, without my leaving the convent: they should be sent there as soon as the house was in a state to receive them. In order to gain this object, it would be well to represent to him, that to hinder these foundations, would be to deprive of souls a great good. If your lordship is acquainted with the protector of our order, who, I am told, is nephew to the pope, he could easily persuade our general to give his consent. If your lordship would be so good as to interest yourself in the matter, you would confer a great favour on our order, and render considerable service to our Lord.

Because I am desirous of telling your lordship everything that happens, it is necessary that I inform you of another difficulty, viz., that Father Tostado has already been received as vicar general in this province; hence you may judge what bad news this is, especially to *me*, who may perhaps fall into his hands; and I have reason to fear he will use all his power to prevent this undertaking. As regard Castile, we do no believe, as far as we can judge at present, that he has made a visitation there, because as he has exercised his duties without showing his

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commission, especially when he visited our monastery of the Incarnation (and this appeared very strange to every one), he was ordered to show his letters patent to the council, by a royal decree: after that he was unable to receive them back again, and I think he never will. We have also letters of exemption given us by the visitors apostolic, which certify that we cannot be visited, except by those whom our father general shall nominate, and they must belong to the reform. But as these commands cannot be observed where religious perfection has fallen to the ground, I hope your lordship will please to inform us how this evil can be remedied, for your lordship shall be sure to have good religious to assist you in your undertakings.

Father Julian d'Avila (who, I believe, is already on the way), sends his most humble respects to your lordship. He is quite delighted to hear the good news about your lordship: he was, however, already acquainted with it, when last I wrote to him. He is convinced that by your lordship's elevation, you will be able to render good service to God and His church. Mary of St. Jerome, sub-prioress of this house, respectfully congratulates your lordship. She says, that to serve your lordship, she would willingly join the foundation, if such were the Divine will. May our Lord direct everything as He pleases, for His own greater glory. May he preserve your lordship, and give you an increase of His holy love.

It is no wonder your lordship cannot enjoy that recollection which you desire, on account of your new dignity. Our Lord will doubly repay you, as He is accustomed to reward those who leave all things for His sake. However, I wish your lordship not to attend so much to exterior things, without devoting at least some small portion of your time to interior recollection; for in this consists our true interest.

I beg of you, for the love of our Lord, not to

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afflict me, by placing what you do on the address of the letters.*

Your Lordship's unworthy Servant and Subject,

TERESA DE JESUS.

From our House of St. Joseph's of Avila, the 16th day of January, 1578.

No. XI.

To Señor Lorenzo de Cepeda y Ahumada, Brother to the Saint.

[Letter 1st. The letters which St. Teresa wrote to her brother are very interesting and instructive. The date of this is about 1561, and it seems to be the first she had written to him for some time. He was then living in the West Indies. She tells us in the "Book of the Foundations" that he lived there for thirty-four years. When he sent her some money, she was then engaged in founding the Convent of St. Joseph at Avila, and was reduced almost to the last farthing. But God came to her assistance.]

JESUS. May the Holy Ghost ever dwell in your heart, and reward you for the care you have had in coming so quickly to our relief. I trust in God you will gain great merit by so charitable an act, for it is certain you bestow your charities just when they are wanted; and all those to whom you sent the money stood so much in need of it, that it has been a great consolation to me. As for a poor nun like myself, who considers it an honour to wear a patched habit, I believe God inspired you to send me so great a sum. What I received from Juan Pedro de Espinosa and

* The bishop of Osma remarks, in his annotations on this letter, that before the edict of Philip II. it was the custom to put on the address of letters the *titles* and *qualities* of the persons to whom they were written. This the Saint could not endure, as the praises of the archbishop wounded her humility. "No me atormente con estos sobrescritos, por amor de nuestro Señor."

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Varron (for such I think was the name of the other merchant)—was quite enough for my necessities for a long time.

As I informed you a long time ago, I have spent the money in a matter I could not help undertaking for several reasons, but chiefly for this, because God had given so many strong inspirations to commence the work. I dare not trust things of this nature in a letter: I can only tell you that learned and holy people assure me I ought not to be timid, but that I must do all I possibly can for this undertaking, viz., to found a monastery,* in which there are to be thirteen religious, and no more, who will be bound to live in strict enclosure, and can never therefore go out. They will never be able to see any one, except with their veil down; their chief duty being to devote themselves to prayer and mortification, as I have told you before at greater length; I will give you more information when Antonio Moran departs.

Madame Guiomar,† who writes this letter for you, is of great service to me. She is the widow of Francis D'Avila, who belonged the family of Solralejo: I don't know if you remember this family. It is nine years since her husband died; he was a very rich man: she now enjoys his property, besides the money she has inherited from her own family. Although she was left a widow at the age of twenty-five, yet she refused to marry again, and has given herself entirely to God. She is a very pious person. It is now more than four years since we have contracted so close a friendship, that I love her as if she were my own sister. But though she assisted me in the "Foundation," by giving me a good part of her income, she cannot now relieve me, because just at

* See the history of this monastery in the Saint's "Life," chap. xxxiii. xxxv. &c.

† This devout and charitable lady was of the greatest assistance to the Saint in the foundation of St. Joseph's monastery.

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present she has no money. With regard to the purchase of the house, I must do this with ready money, by the Divine assistance. I have already received (though the monastery has not yet begun) the dowry of two young ladies. By the help of this money, I have secretly purchased the house, though I have not money enough to remodel it for a convent. But I have great confidence in God's assistance, knowing that it is His will the thing should be done. I had engaged the workmen, though it may have seemed very foolish to do so. But His Majesty took care of us all, and moved you to come to our assistance. What surprises me the more is, that I was just in want of the forty crowns which you sent. I think that St. Joseph (who is to be the patron of the house) has assisted me by your means: I am sure he will repay you, though the monastery is very poor and small; it has a good prospect, and I think we shall have room enough.

Some of the fathers have gone to Rome for the Bulls; for though the house will belong to the Order, we shall be under obedience to the bishop. I trust in our Lord, that all things will prosper for His greater glory, if we should accomplish the undertaking (as I think we certainly shall), because those who are to enter the house are chosen souls, capable of being very great examples of humility, penance, and prayer. I beg of you to recommend the matter to God. I hope, by the help of His Grace, everything will be finished before Antonio Moran goes away. He came here, and I received great comfort from seeing him: he seems to be a man one can depend upon, and to possess good judgment. He gave me every particular about you. I think that the greatest favour our Lord could bestow on me, was to make me understand from what he told me, that you were convinced of the vanity of the world, and had made a resolution to retire from it altogether, and live in repose and quiet. If you do so, I think you will be walking in

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the road to heaven. This was what I wanted most to know, for till then I had been rather uneasy. Glory be to Him who doth all things. May He give you grace to advance more and more in His service; for since the reward will be without bounds, we ought not to make any delay in endeavouring to serve our Lord, but daily advance (however little this may be) with such fervour, that it may appear we are always at war, until we gain the victory: we must not rest, nor be negligent till then.

All those with whom you sent the money for me have been honest men, but Antonio Moran has excelled them all, both in selling the gold at a greater price and without any expense, and also in having taken the trouble to come here from Madrid to bring it, to the prejudice of his health—for he was very unwell on the journey, though he is now better. I see that he is truly and sincerely attached to you. He has with great care brought Varron's money also. Roderigo came with him too, and has likewise acquitted himself well of his commission. I will give him a letter for you, if he should depart before Moran, who has shown me the letter you wrote to him. You may be assured, that the great care you have taken in assisting me, is to my mind not only the effect of your goodness, but must have been inspired by God Himself.

My sister Mary* sent me this letter yesterday to be forwarded to you. She tells me she will write to you again as soon as she has received the rest of the money you sent her. She received the first sum in good time. She is a very good woman, but full of troubles. Should Juan de Ovalle go to law against her, her children will be ruined. The matter, however, is not so great as one would imagine, though it was certainly wrong to sell the property and destroy it. Martin de Guzman, however, has his reasons, and

* Doña Maria de Cepeda. She was married to Don Martin de Guzman.

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God forgive him: the court has decided in his favour, against all right. I cannot endure, that what my father sold (God rest his soul), should now be demanded back again. My sister Mary would come very badly off if they resumed the lawsuit. God preserve me from such interest, which pays no regard to relationship. But such a thing is so common in this country, that it would be a wonder to see a father and son, or brother and brother agree together; hence, I do not wonder at the conduct of Juan de Ovalle: I rather think he has acted tolerably well, seeing that for my sake he did not go on with the lawsuit. He has a good heart, but in this case he is not to be trusted; and therefore when you send him the thousand reals you must make him sign a deed, by which he will be obliged, when he receives the said sum, to give five hundred ducats to my sister Mary on the day when he shall first recommence the lawsuit.

The houses of Juan de Centura are not yet sold, but Martin de Guzman has already received three hundred thousand maravedés* for them, which sum it is only proper should be given to Juan de Ovalle; and if you would send him the thousand crowns, he would then be able to live here, for just now he is in great want of them; but should the money not come, he will have no means of coming here, and his affairs will not be arranged for a long time.

My sister Jane† has married well. I assure you she is a very good woman, and very generous: she has the soul of an angel, thanks be to God. I am the worst of all, whom you would hardly know to be your sister, because I have degenerated so much. I know not why people love me to such a degree: this I say in all sincerity. My sister has had many troubles, but she has borne them with great patience. If you can send her anything without injury to your-

* An ancient Spanish coin.
† Juana de Ahumada.

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self, do so as soon as possible, even though it be little at a time.

You will see by this letter that the money has been delivered as you ordered. Toribia and her husband are dead; and we distributed the money among their children, who are poor: this has given them great assistance. We have had all the masses said which you wished; I even think some had been said before the money came. They were offered for the good intentions you named, which pleased me much, and edified me too. I sought out the best priest I could to say them. In the midst of all this business, I am stopping at the house of Madame Guiomar: I found great comfort in being among persons who so frequently spoke of you. I will tell you the occasion which procured me this happiness. As a daughter of this lady's, who is a nun in our monastery of the Incarnation, was allowed to go and see her mother, the provincial ordered me to accompany her. Here I enjoy more liberty in everything I wish, than I did when I was at my sister's house, because we speak of nothing but God, and are very recollected. I shall stay here till the father provincial shall order me elsewhere. I wish he would allow me to stop for some time, for here I am better able to manage the business I spoke to you about.

But let us now speak of my dear sister Jane:* though I name her last, she does not hold the last place in my heart, for I assure you I pray to God for her with as much affection as I do for *you*, and I love her as much as yourself. I thank her a thousand times for the favour she has done me. All I can do for her is often to recommend her and her little boy to God. I have recommended him particularly to that holy friar, Peter of Alcantara, who promised to pray for him: he is that religious of whom I spoke to you before. I have also requested the

* This was another sister of the Saint.

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Theatin* fathers, and several others, to pray for him, and whose prayers I hope God will hear. May His Majesty be pleased to make him better than his parents: I do not mean that you are not good, but I wish him to be something more. Pray always inform me of the love and contentment in which you both live, for I receive great pleasure therefrom.

I have already told you that I will send you a copy of the "Executory Letters," which people tell me cannot be better. I will take every care that you shall receive them by Antonio Moran. But if by any misfortune they should be lost, or anything happen to him, so that he could not deliver them, I will send you some others, till I hear you have received them safe into your own hands. If they have not been sent sooner, it is owing to the caprice of an individual, whose name I do not wish to mention. You will also receive some relics which I send you: they are enclosed in a case, which has not cost much. I thank my sister a thousand times for the beautiful image she has given me. Had I received it at the time I wore gold, I should very likely have kept it, for it is exceeding pretty. I beg of God to keep you both in health for many years. This wish comes in at the right time, for to-morrow is the eve of the year 1562.

Having been so long engaged with Antonio Moran, I was obliged to commence writing when it was very late: had not this been the case, I should have written a longer letter. But as he intends setting off to-morrow, I will keep the rest of the news till my brother Geronimo de Cepeda goes away, when I will send a letter by him. But it is no matter, that I have written in such haste. Always read my letters. I have taken great care that the ink should be good. I have, however, written this letter in such a hurry, and so late, as I have told you, that I had no time to

* The Saint means the Jesuits, who in her time were often erroneously called Theatins.

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read it over. My health is better than it used to be. I pray God to grant you such health of soul and body, as I desire you may have. Amen. I have not time now to write to Señor Hernando Ahumada, nor to Pedro de Ahumada, but I soon will. I wish to tell you that some persons who wish me well, and who know the particulars of my undertaking, consider it a miracle that you sent the money just when I wanted it. I hope in God that when I want any more, he will move your heart to assist me, even should you be unwilling yourself.

Your very loving Sister,

DOÑA TERESA DE AHUMADA.*

No. XII.

To Señor Lorenzo de Cepeda, Brother to the Saint.

[Letter 2nd. The date of this letter is about the year 1577. It is not the second letter in chronological order. It was written from Toledo.]

Jesus be with you.

Serna† gives me so little time, that I cannot write so long a letter as I could wish; and yet, when I am writing to *you*, I know not how to finish: but as Serna is not always at hand, he must give me a little more time. When I write to Francis, I beg you would never read his letters, for I fear he is somewhat inclined to melancholy, and he feels a difficulty in telling me of it. Perhaps God gives him these scruples in order to deliver him from other dangers.

* The name of the Saint's mother was Beatrice Ahumada. She was her father's second wife.

† This is the individual's name who brought the letter from the Saint's brother.

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I hope, however, to give him a remedy, and I find he is well disposed to receive it, for he believes all I tell him.

I am quite certain I sent the manuscript, though I did wrong in not telling you of it beforehand. I had given it to one of our sisters to transcribe it, and when I wanted it she could not find it. There is no means of your having another, till we send to Seville for a copy.

I believe I sent another letter to you by the way of Madrid; however, in case it should be lost, I must repeat in this letter what I said in that, though I dislike being troubled with this affair. I must tell you then, in the first place, that the house of Hernan Alvarez de Peralta—where you lodge—has a room in a bad condition, and it is likely to be dangerous; so take care! In the second place, I beg you would send me the little box, with all the papers that belong to me; they were put together in bundles, as far as I can recollect: take care the box be sewed up well. If Madame Quiteria should give the packet to Serna, the messenger, she may put it in the box, and then it will come safe. Tell her to send it. Do not forget also to put in *my seal*, for I do not like to seal my letters with a figure of death; rather I wish to seal them with a figure of Him* who I earnestly wish was engraven on my heart, as it was on the heart of St. Ignatius. Let no one open the box but yourself (for I believe the paper on prayer is in it): take care if you see anything else there not to mention it to any one, for I do not give you leave, neither is it proper I should; and although you might think you were thus doing a service to God, yet there are several reasons which ought to oblige you to keep it secret, and this must be sufficient for you. If I thought you said anything to any one, I should take good care not to let you know anything for the future.

* Our blessed Lord.

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The nuncio has requested me to send him a copy of the "letters patent" which I use in founding our houses. He wants to know how many there are already founded, and in what places. He also desires me to send him the number of religious, whence they have come, their age, and how many of them can be prioresses. All these papers are in the box: indeed, I must have everything in it. People tell me, that the nuncio wishes to know all these things in order to make a new province. But I am afraid he is desirous our religious should go and reform other convents, as he often wished to have done before; this, however, would not be for our good. I beg you will acquaint the sub-prioress with the nuncio's wish, and tell her to send me the names of all those who have made their profession in the house, also the age of all those who are there now, and the year of their reception and profession. She must write all this in a book, and sign her name at the end.

But now I remember, I am prioress of that house* myself: as I can sign the paper myself, it is unnecessary for her to do it; she need only tell me what I have already mentioned, and it does not signify whether the writing is in her own hand or not, for I must copy it. It is unnecessary for the sisters to know anything of the matter. Be sure you send me everything, and take care the papers do not get wet. Don't forget to send the key.

The book I spoke to you about is the "Meditations on the Lord's Prayer."† There you will find many things proper to direct you in the prayer you make use of, though not at such length as in the other work. I think what I say you will find in the petition, "Thy kingdom come." Read it over again, at least the Lord's Prayer; perhaps you will find something that will satisfy you.

* At Avila, where her brother was then residing.

† These are printed with her other works, and have been translated into English.

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Before I forget, how came you to make such a promise,* without telling me about it? A fine obedience this! Your resolution has given me some uneasiness, though it has somewhat pleased me; but it seems to me dangerous. Take advice about the matter, because from a venial sin it might become a mortal one, by your having made such a promise. I will likewise ask my confessor about it, for he is a very learned man. Your promise seems to me foolish, because what I promised was with other additions; but this I should certainly not have presumed to promise, for I think even the Apostles fell into venial sins. Our Lady alone was preserved from them. I really believe that God will accept your intention; yet I think it would be much better to change your promise into something else: this may be done by getting a dispensation, if you should not have one already. Do it speedily: the jubilee will be just the time. It is so easy to fall into venial sin, that without our observing it we may commit it. God deliver us from it; but I trust He will not impute this to our fault. He knows well our nature. In my opinion, it is necessary to apply a remedy immediately, and that no promise of this nature be made by you for the future, for it is dangerous to do so. You might sometimes, without any inconvenience, speak on the subject of your prayer with your confessors, who are near at hand; they can give you the best advice on everything, and nothing is lost.

Do not be troubled about your having purchased the farm at Serna;† it is a temptation from the devil, who tries to prevent you from being grateful to God for having thereby bestowed a very great favour upon you. Be assured that what you have done is for the best in many respects, for you have provided for your

* To abstain from venial sins.

† The bishop of Osma mentions that this was an estate about a league from Avila.

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children something better than an estate, viz. honour. Every one who hears of it considers it a great happiness. Do you imagine that in collecting rents there is no trouble? None in continually sending executions?* Consider this to be a temptation. Do not fall into it again; but rather praise God for having given you the farm. Do not think that when you have a great deal of time you must apply more to prayer. This is a mistake: for time well spent in providing a maintenance for our children does not exclude prayer. In one instant, God often gives more than He does in a long period, for his works are not confined to times and seasons.

After the holydays are over, get some one immediately to examine your deeds, and put them in the order they ought to be. What you have spent on Serna is well spent, and when summer comes you will feel great delight in sometimes going there. Jacob did not cease to be a saint for minding his flocks; nor Abraham, nor St. Joachim: when we try to fly from trouble everything wearies us; so it does me, and therefore God is pleased that I should have business enough to occupy me. On these matters speak with Francisco Salcedo,† for in these temporal matters I give him my place.

It is a great favour from God, that what gives rest to others tires you. But you must not on this account give up your business; for we must serve God not as *we* wish, but as He wishes. Certain profits may, I think, be excused, and therefore I am glad in some degree that you leave this kind of gains to God, for in these worldly matters we must be content to lose something, than to be too liberal in giving;—seeing God has given you enough to live on, you can give something to those who are in want, though not

* These words we must suppose the brother addresses to the Saint.

† This was the name of a very pious gentleman, who was given to prayer. The Saint used to call him the "holy cavalier"—el caballero santo.

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too much. I do not call that trafficking which you intend to do at Serna, for it is very proper; but I mean other ways of gain. But I have already told you to follow the opinion of Francisco Salcedo in all these matters, and then you will not be troubled with these scruples. Always remember me most kindly to him, and every one else you think proper. I wish I had time to write to Pedro de Ahumada, in order to get a letter from him, for I enjoy his letters exceedingly.

Tell Teresa* she need not fear I should have more love for another than I have for her. Let her distribute the pictures, but not meddle with that which I intend for myself; tell her to give some of them to her brothers. I have a great desire to see her. What you wrote to me about at Seville caused great devotion in me. I received some of your letters here, and our sisters were much pleased on hearing them read in recreation-time; I also was pleased, for I imagine you would rather cease to live than not to be good-humoured; but as you are with holy persons, everything is proper. I believe our sisters here are holy too: every moment they make me blush.

Yesterday we celebrated the great Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus. God reward you for your presents. I know not what to send you for the many favours you bestow upon me, except these verses,† which I have composed by the command of my confessor, in order to amuse the nuns. For several evenings I have been with them, and I knew not how to divert them except by these verses. They might have a pleasant air, if little Frank knew how to sing them. Have I not greatly improved? Notwithstanding, our Lord has bestowed great favours on me during these days.

* A cousin of the Saint.

† They are called in Spanish "villancicos." They come at the end of the letter.

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The favours you have received astonish me. May He be blessed for ever. I know it is a good thing to desire devotion as you do. But it is one thing to desire, and another to *ask* it. But I believe it is the best to leave, as you do, all things in the will of God, and to commit your cause into His hands. He knows what is best for us. But always endeavour to walk along the way I have marked out for you: remember that it is of more consequence than you imagine.

It will not be amiss, when you sometimes awake with these holy affections, to sit up a little in your bed, provided however you always take the repose necessary for your head; otherwise, though you may not perceive it, you will at last be unable to make use of prayer. Take care not to expose yourself too much to cold, for it does not suit your cholic. I know not why you desire these terrors and fears, since God conducts you by the way of love. Once those were necessary. Think not it is always the devil that tries to prevent us from praying, it is a mercy of God that sometimes we are prevented from using prayer; nay, I will even say that this is almost as great a favour as when He gives us much prayer: there are many reasons in proof of this, but now I have no time to mention them. The prayer God gives you is without comparison much higher than thinking on hell. It does not depend upon you to give the preference to one or the other: you cannot help following that which God gives you, because such is His will.

The answers* of some of our sisters made me laugh.

* To enable the reader to understand this part of the letter, it is necessary to mention that one day the Saint heard a voice in the interior of her soul, saying "Buscate en mi"—Seek yourself in me. She mentioned these words to her brother Lorenzo, who was then at Avila. The bishop, Alvaro de Mendoza, heard of the secret, and ordered the words to be made the subject of a spiritual recreation, and each of the nuns was enjoined to write down what seemed to her to be the meaning. Four other persons also gave an explana-

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Others are extraordinary, and they have given me some light about the meaning of the words; for do not think that I understand them. I only mentioned the circumstance casually to you; I will tell you my opinion on the subject, please God, when I see you. The answer of Francisco de Salcedo pleased me much. His humility is very admirable, for God conducts him in such a manner by fear, that perhaps he did not like to speak of such things in the same way as we do. We must accommodate ourselves to souls as we find them. I tell you he is a saint; but God does not guide him in the same way He does you. In a word, he conducts him as a strong man, but us as weak souls. He answered well for one of his disposition.

I have read your letter over again. I do not mean you should rise in the night, but only sit up in your bed. This seems to me sufficient, since it is important to be able to take your rest. On no account then rise, though you may feel great fervour; and if you sleep more, do not make yourself uneasy on that account. If you should hear what Father Peter of Alcantara used to say on this point,* let it not terrify you, even though this fervour come upon you when you remain awake.

Your letters do not tire me, but comfort me exceedingly; and so I should feel great pleasure in writing to you oftener, but I cannot do so, as my afflictions are so troublesome; even this very night I have been prevented from attending to prayer. This gives me no scruples; still it is a misery to have no leisure. May God send us some, that we may always spend it in His service. Amen.

This is a dreadful place† for those do not eat meat,

tion of them; viz. St. John of the Cross, the Ven. John of Avila, Francisco de Salcedo, and her own brother. (See Carta V. Spanish ed. vol. i. p. 28.)

* He said he used to take only three hours' sleep.

† Toledo.

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and yet I was thinking that I have not been in such good health for these many years, as I am now. I observe what all the others do, and this is a great comfort to me.

This is the 2nd of January.

Your unworthy Servant and Sister,

TERESA DE JESUS.

P.S.—I thought you would have sent us some of your verses; as for mine, they have neither head nor feet, and yet the nuns sing them. I now remember some which I once composed, when I was absorbed in prayer. They seemed to give a sweet repose to me after I had composed them. They were (I know not whether exactly) as follows, hence you see I am desirous of giving you some recreation:—

1.

O hermosura que excedeis,
A todas las hermosuras!
Sin herir, dolor haceis;
Y sin dolor, deshaceis
Con amor de las creaturas.

2.

O ñudo, que ansi juntais
Dos cosas tan desiguales!
No sé porque os desatais:
Pues atado, fuerza dais
A tener por bien los males.

3.

Quien no tiene sér, juntais
Con el sér que no se acaba:
Sin acabar, acabais;
Sin tener que amar, amais:
Engrandeceis nuestra nada.*

* Not being a poet, I dare not venture to translate these verses into English. In Appendix No. II. I have given Woodhead's translation, such as it is.

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I do not remember any more. O! the wit of a foundress! I tell you I must have been very clever when I made these lines! God forgive you, for it is you who made me spend my time; and yet these stanzas may soften your heart and excite some devotion in it. Do not speak of them to any one. Madame Guiomar and myself were together at the time: give my kinds regards to her.

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APPENDIX.

No. I.

Carta XIV. (Spanish ed. vol. i.)

Al Reverendo Padre Maestro Fray Luis de Granda, de la Orden de Santo Domingo.

JESUS. La Gracia del Espíritu Santo sea siempre con V. Paternidad. Amen.

De las muchas personas que aman en el Señor á V. Paternidad, por haber escrito tan santa y provechosa dòctrina, y dan gracias á su Magestad, por haberle dado á v. Paternidad para tan grande, y universal bien de las almas, soy yo una. Y entiendo de mi, que por ningun trabajo hubiera dexado de vér á quien tanto me consuela oir sus palabras, si se sufriera conforme á mi estado, y ser muger. Porque sin esta causa, la he tenido de buscar personas semejantes, para aseguran los temores, en que mi alma ha vivido algunos años. Y ya que esto no he mérecido, heme consolado de que el Señor Don Teutonio me ha mandado escribir ésta; á lo que yo ho hubiera atrevimiento. Mas fiada en la obediencia, espero en nuestro Señor me ha de aprovechar, para que v. Paternidad le acuerde alguna vez de encomendarme á nuestro Señor: que tengo dello gran necesidad, por andar con poco caudal, puesta en los ojos del mundo, sin tener ninguno para hacer de verdad algo de lo que imaginan de mi.

Entender v. Paternidad esto, bastaria á hacerme merced, y limosna; pues tan bien entiende lo que ha en él, y el gran trabajo que es, para quien ha vivido una vida harto ruin. Con serlo tanto, me he atrevido muchas veces á pedir á nuestro Señor la vida de v. Paternidad sea muy larga.

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Plegue á su Magestad me haga esta merced, y vaya v. Paternidad creciendo en santidad, y amor suyo. Amen.

Indigna sierva, y subdita de v. Paternidad,

TERESA DE JESUS, *Carmelita.*

El Señor Don Teutonio, creo es de los engañados en lo que me toca. Diceme quiere mucho á v. Paternidad. En págo desto, está v. Paternidad obligado á visitar á su Señoria, no se crea tan sin causa.

Carta XII. (Spanish ed. vol. i.)

A la Ilustrisima Señora Doña Ana Henriquez. En Toro.

JESUS. La Gracia del Espiritu Santo sea con V. M. siempre.

Harto consuelo fuera para mi hallar á V. M. en este lugar: y diera por bien empleado el camino, por gozar de V. M. con mas asiento que en Salamanca. No he merecido esta merced de nuestro Señor: sea por siempre bendito. Esta Priora se lo ha gozado todo; en fin, es mejor que yo, y harto servidora de V. M.

Harto me he holgado haya tenido V. M. á mi Padre Baltasar Alvarez algunos dias, porque haya alivio de tantos trabajos. Bendito sea el Señor, que tiene V. M. mas salud que suele. La mia es ahora harto mejor, que todos estos otros años; que es harto en este tiempo. Hallé tales almas en estas Casas, que me ha hecho alabar á nuestro Señor. Y aunque Estefania cierto es á mi parecer santa, el talento de Casilda, y las mercedes que el Señor ha hace, despues que tomó el Hábito, me ha satisfecto mucho. Su Majestad lo lleve avelante, que mucho es de freciar almas, que tan con tiempo las toma para si.

La simplicidad de Estefania paro todo, sino es para Dios, es cosa que me espanta, quando veo la Sabiduria que en su lenguage tiene de la verdad.

Ha visitado el Padre Provincial esta Casa, y ha hecho Eleccion. Acudieron á la mesma que se tenian; y traemos para Supriora una de San Joseph de Avila, que eligieron

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que se llama Antonia del Espiritu Santo. La Señora Doña Guiomar la conoce; es harto bien espiritu.

La Fundacion de Zamora se ha quedado por ahora, y tornó á la jornada larga que iba. Ya yo habia pensado de procurar mi contento, con ir por ese Lugar, para besar á V. M. las manos. Mucho há que no tengo Carta de mi Padre Baltasár Alvarez, ni le escribo: y no cierto por mortificarme, que en esto nunca tengo aprovechamiento, y aun credo en todo, sino que son tantos los tormentos destas Cartas: y quando alguno es solo para mi contento, siempre me falta tiempo. Bendito sea Dios, que hemos de gozar dél con seguridad eternalmente; que cierto acá con estas ausencias, y variedades en todo, poco caso podemos hacer de nada. Con este esperar el fin, paso la vida: dicen, que con trabajos, á mi no me lo parece.

Acá me cuenta la Madre Priora del mi Guardador, que no le cae en menos gracia su gracia, que á mi. Nuestro Señor le haga muy Santo. Suplico á V. M. dé á su merced mis encomiendas. Yo le ofrezco á nuestro Señor Muchas veces, y al Señor Don Juan Antonio lo mesmo. V. M. ho me olvide por amor del Señor, que siempre tengo necesidad. De la Señora Doña Guiomar, ya nos podemos descuidar, segun V. M. dice, y ella encaece. Harto gustára de saber algun principio de tan buen suceso, para atinar á lo que es, por gozar de contento, el que V. M. tiene. Desele nuestro Señor á V. M. en el alma esta Pasqua, tan grande como yo se lo suplicaré.

Este dia de Santo Tomé, hizo aqui el Padre Fray Domingo un Sermon, á donde puso en tal término los trabajos, que yo quisiera haber tenido muchos: y aunque me los de el Señor en lo por venir. En estremo me han contentado sus sermones. Tienenle elegido por prior: no se salie si le confirmarán. Anda tan ocupado, que le he gozada harto poco, mas con otro tanto que viera á V. M. me contentára. Ordenelo el Señor, y dé á V. M. tanta salud, y descanso, como es menester para ganar el que no tiene fin. Es Manaña vispera de Pascua.

Indigna sierva, y subdita de V. M.,

TERESA DE JESUS.

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No. II.

The following translation of the Spanish verses, by Woodhead, may give the reader *some* imperfect idea of the meaning of the original. (See the last letter.)

" O Beauty ! that so far transcendest
The beauties of all features !
Thou woundest us, yet not offendest :
And without pain too, away takest
All love we have for creatures.

Strange love-knot, that together draws
Such distant things to meet !
What then can a disunion cause ?
When tied, thou rul'st o'er nature's laws,
And mak'st e'en sufferings sweet.

Things void of being thou hast joined
To endless being, and to bliss :
When all 's bestowed, still more remains :
Where nought is to love, Thou art kind :
Thou makest great, what nothing is."

The French translation of the Spanish reads much better than the English, though it sadly wants the *terseness* of the original.

" Vous triomphez, ô Beauté sans seconde :
Pour vous j'éprouve un tourment enchanteur :
Et vos attraits me détachent du monde,
Sans qu'il en coûte un soupir à mon cœur.

Qu'il est puissant ce nœud qui joint ensemble
Les deux sujets les moins faits pour s'unir !
Tant que ce nœud par vos soins les assemble,
Les plus grand maux se changent en plaisir.

Le rien s'unit à l'être par essence :
Et l'immortel me paroît expirant :
L'indigne objet de votre complaisance
A peine existe, et vous le rendez grand."

COX (BROTHERS) AND WYMAN, PRINTERS, GREAT QUEEN STREET.

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